

**Underwood**

**SmileForMeTae**

# Copyright Information

---

This ebook was automatically created by [FicLab](#) v1.0.109 on September 2nd, 2024, based on content retrieved from [www.asianfanfics.com/story/view/1078269/](http://www.asianfanfics.com/story/view/1078269/).

The content in this book is copyrighted by [SmileForMeTae](#) or their authorised agent(s). All rights are reserved unless explicitly stated otherwise. Please do not share or republish this work without the express permission of the copyright holder.

If you are the author or copyright holder, and would like further information about this ebook, please read the author FAQ at [www.ficlab.com/author-faq](http://www.ficlab.com/author-faq).

This story was first published on January 20th, 2016, and was last updated on March 23rd, 2016.

FicLab ID: cO2MKQG5/m0kvfcgx/1t100E561

# Table of Contents

---

Title Page
Copyright Information
Table of Contents
Summary
Foreword
Chapter 2
Chapter 3
Chapter 4
Chapter 5
Chapter 6

# Summary

---

title	Underwood
author	SmileForMeTae
source	<a href="https://www.asianfanfics.com/story/view/1078269/">https://www.asianfanfics.com/story/view/1078269/</a>
published	January 20th, 2016
updated	March 23rd, 2016
words	32,703
chapters	6
status	Complete
rating	Unknown
tags	Complete, Fanfiction, alternateuniverse, kaisoo, underwoodau, wolfau

## Description

In a world in which shapeshifters are hunted, Kyungsoo finds himself lost and found by a soldier from the Underwoods.

# Foreword

---

**Title:** Underwood

**Pairing:** KaiSoo (*Wolf!Kai & Human!Soo*)

**Length:** Short Story (*Sequel&Prequel planned*)

**Genre:** Wolf!Au, (*failed*) Smut & Knotting, Angst, Relationship Development

**Summary:** Times of humans and wolves living together came to an end and it is the start of an episode where the shifters get hunted down for fun. When werewolves are said to be extinct, Kyungsoo finds himself thrown through a portal to the Underwoods — a parallel world where the shifters live withdrawn from the humans. Now it all depends on Kai if he dies or lives.

**Warnings:** possible character death ahead, yaaaay. *\*prepares tissues\** Also quite a messed up plot... (cuz what is a plot lol ( T ▽ T ))

“CH01 — 100% done.” ‘uploaded; beta-read.’

“CH02 — 100% done.” ‘uploaded; beta-read.’

“CH03 — 100% done.” ‘uploaded; beta-read.’

“CH04 — 100% done.” ‘uploaded; beta-read.’

“N O T E S”                      ‘Notes & Last Words.’

“R E V I E W S”                ‘Feedback & Criticism’

**Graphis:** *Thanks to SedBau from aliceblue graphic shop for making this damn freaking amazing poster!!*

**Beta:** *Very mucho thankies as well to ValeKissme for helping me with proofreading all the chapters! \ (^ ▽ ^ ) /*

**Review #01:** Got a score of 86/100 from NorgeKaterina at The Library Review Shop! Find the Review **here**.

**Review #02:** Got a score of 78/100 from MieChan at the Drowning in Fireworks Review Shop! Find the Review **here**.

— Smile :)

*Nominated for*

***Best in Fantasy, Best in Romance & Best in Angst within the World Of Literature 2016 FanFiction Awards! \*\****

***CHECK THE OTHER NOMINATIONS OUT! :3***

## Chapter 2

---

01                      What do I do when there's too much of me, too little of you?

Once, there had been a time when you would see huge wolves roam through the streets at night. Majestic and with authority, they had patrolled through the villages and smaller cities and watched over the sleeping humans in their houses along the streets.

They protected them from thieves and psychotic people, and also from other wolves — mostly rogues — who killed humans for fun. It was a silent agreement between the two races.

They could stay and live peacefully with their packs in the woods and in return, they would offer protection to the weaker ones, a win-win situation for both sides.

Some of the shifters even lived with the humans and had families with them, but you would never actually know the person was a shifter if you weren't their mate and family, or a very close and trusted acquaintance.

But such times always come to an end.

There is always a part of every community that wants death and despair, that *craves for war*.

After centuries of living together in peace, a silent underground organization made it their mission to find and kill all the shape shifters in the city. People wouldn't know anyway and when whole families disappeared, all blame fell on the wolves. In the humans' eyes it was the shifters' faults since their mission had been to protect the humans. Shortly afterwards, the patrols were made even more thorough and lasted longer.

But someday, even wolves had started disappearing from their tasks and the trust between the races began to waver. Both sides started complaining about each other, humans were scared and wolves angered, and soon it became obvious that the pack's numbers steadily

decreased.

The human citizens decided to take things into their own hands and slowly ousted the wolves from patrol duties. They started giving every man from old to young a weapon to defend himself and the people near him. The command was clear: shoot if a threat — even wolves — but especially *wolves*.

But you can't trust every person with a weapon, even less so when there is a mass panic and no one can control his own thoughts because they're fogged by emotion and the desperate need to survive.

Nowadays, parents tell their children stories of the bad, bad werewolves that exploited their trust and that humans should always only ever believe in fellow humans and stick together because only that way could they overcome any danger.

Werewolves were now extinct — having vanished from the surface of earth for good.

*Werewolves were extinct.*

That's what Kyungsoo's always been told.

But if that was true, why did Kyungsoo find himself running at full speed from that exact species that was said to be dead. The huge, furry beast behind him was growling aggressively and bounded with enormous strength after him.

He himself was panting hard, his breath coming out in short white puffs in the cold air. His heart thumped wildly, as if trying to leap out of his body towards safety.

Kyungsoo's leather jacket barely hung on his shoulders, doing nothing to shield his body from the cold winter air that seemed to cut through his skin to the bones. He was limping since he had lost one of his boots somehow when he'd slid over frosted ground and now the thought flashed through him that his mother had been right when she said they were too big for him. Pitch black strands of hair interrupted his vision as they bat his eyes, scratching the sensitive surface.

He rounded yet another corner and almost collided into the wall that was there instead of an expected pathway. He heard a menacing



growl and a few shots of a gun accompanied by shouting. For a split second, he was relieved to no end that he could collapse without worries. He wanted to thank his savior but the ground split and Kyungsoo fell. That was all that he managed to realize, because soon his exhaustion came over him and everything went black.

“Is that all you got?”

The student leapt forward in his wolf form, snarling angrily and his red eyes glowing as he tried to get a hold of the soldier to rip one of his body parts off and *finally* taste his blood on his teeth. But all it took was a blink of an eye and the wolf was on the ground, upper part of his body strangely twisted. The sound of pained cries filled the air as the soldier stood his ground, not even a hair out of place.

“What did you do all of those sessions before? If you mutts are going to be our next generation of soldiers, we’ll all die! You’re an embarrassment!” The soldier barked. “Your movements are too predictable, too slow and stiff. It isn’t all about attacking, you also need to be able to defend yourself, but it is clear that you can’t even do that. And if you can’t, then how will you protect others?”

He could see how drained and scared his students were. But it was truly a shame, he was in his human form and still, more than half of the class was brought down in mere seconds. He clenched his teeth and turned his head slowly, inspecting every one of the quivering beings before him. He started walking back and forth, ignoring how the shifter on the ground was carried away to be tended to. Not once did his face show a sign of sympathy. The soldier halted in front of a boy who was looking him straight in the face, obviously plotting his murder without hiding it.

“You all are weak. And I expect you—” he gripped the boy’s chin, raising his voice and pushed his head up roughly, not caring if he caused the boy pain. “—to train starting today. Every free minute you have I want you to work out, strengthen your body, to learn offensive and defensive strategies.”

There was no reaction. No one dared to even breathe out of fear of doing it wrongly and being the next target.

Pleased, the soldier straightened up and took a few steps back so he could be seen by everyone. “You can hate me — I am sure you already do — but don’t even think I care. As long as I am in charge of you

mutts, I will do what's expected from me, and that is to make you capable of protecting your kin and to be of use. That's it for today. Step back and retreat."

Immediately everyone bowed in front of the soldier and retreated, many of them not before shooting him a last quick glare. He took note of it, but he frankly didn't care as he kept standing in his place and pinched his temples. A frown made its way onto his face from the realization of an incoming headache.

"I would say you are a horrible teacher for them if I didn't know we both had it worse in our days."

Kai didn't need to turn around to know it was Chanyeol, another soldier and good companion of his. That deep voice like that of a bass was recognizable anywhere.

Chanyeol was right; when they both were students themselves years ago, it was way worse. It was surely the worst time of his life back then, but after being hunted for years and seeing many sinister things, he could only be thankful.

They both started their way back through the woods to their chambers, Chanyeol chatting comfortably and Kai having zoned out from the start. His mind was already thinking about the next days of training with young wolves that only focused on attacking instead of fighting. Something else invaded Kai's mind and he sighed.

"I forgot I have to guard the portal tonight."

Without further words Kai strode in another direction and Chanyeol merely continued on his way. It wasn't the first, and most surely not the last, time a thing like this had happened.

Night had already fallen when Kai arrived at his post and, without any words, the leaving guard bid him goodbye with a pat onto his shoulder, going onto his merry way and leaving Kai alone. They all were already used to his behavior and knew that he was a man of few words, actions doing the talking for him most of the time. So he sat down by a near tree in a good spot where he would have the whole area around the portal in sight, and let his thoughts wander as they always did when he was forced to do his part of the job.

The portal itself was a large cave-like entrance, surrounded by trees and shrubbery, which easily concealed whatever may lurk there. For example, the younger wolves would use the bushes to disguise them when they would try to enter the other world. For the young wolves, it wasn't about them visiting the other side of the portal, it was about them realizing what power a wolf had as opposed to a human, and it was vital that they didn't put their pack in danger because of their rash decisions.

In the Underwoods were shapeshifters who had managed to flee to in the early days. It was a huge territory protected by a magical forcefield that would keep everything unwelcome out. For those who stood outside, it appeared to be a regular forest and even if they wandered through it, they wouldn't sense anything out of the ordinary; but from the view of one who lived inside, it was a large village of shapeshifters. There was no other way the race could have survived for that long if not for this glamour that protected them.

Their paths shouldn't cross again, but who has control of fate?

Maybe it was fate that Kai didn't kill Kyungsoo on the spot when he fell through the portal, ragged clothes revealing than covering and scraped knees making him look so unfortunate.

Maybe it was fate that Kyungsoo didn't smell like danger but like home and love to Kai.

And maybe it was also fate that when Kai's hand touched the cold but still soft skin of the human's palm, Kyungsoo's own hand somehow found Kai's and interlaced their fingers.

That night the Soldier Kai — whom many considered one of the best Soldiers of his generation — broke the most important rule in the Underwoods: never, ever, let a human stay alive if he found his way to the Underwoods, regardless of if it was an unpleasant surprise for him or he'd meant to find them.

Kai, who had never hesitated to follow the rules or even thought about deceiving his kin, was now staring at the hand that was holding his and wondering why the way pale skin contrasted with his tan one under the soft light of the moon looked so perfect.

The moon, he decided, should be the only one to know about his secret.

His secret of having found his soulmate in a human.

And only the leaves dancing in the wind could hear how madly his heart was beating in his chest.

When Kyungsoo woke up, he found himself on a bed. It was small and uncomfortable, only a thin blanket and a single pillow cushioning him from the hard mattress beneath him. It was quite dark and it took him a few seconds to let his eyes get used to his surroundings. He propped himself up on his elbows, hissing when the irritated skin connected with rough textile, and turned his head to see where the hell he was. He could remember how he was chased, how his body hurt, the gunshots and shouting. And the creature that has been chasing him.

Right. How could a wolf chase him? Weren't they said to have been hunted down to the very last one? Kyungsoo was confused to say the least, but right now he needed to know where he was. Slowly, he rose up and ignored his aching muscles, relieved to see that he still was in his own clothes. He made his way to where the outlines of the door could be seen.

“Where do you think you’re going?”

Kyungsoo jolted and stood still before turning slowly to see where the voice came from. A person sat on an armchair, cross-legged and head held up by one of his palms, elbow resting on the armrest. He couldn't see the boy — or man — clearly, but his breathing speeded up as he made out the man's striking red eyes in the dark.

“Are you scared?”

He heard the voice again and suddenly the eyes vanished. A second later he felt hot breath fanning down his neck.

“Tell me, human. Are you scared?”

Kyungsoo's body started shivering violently and he hastened forward, frantically reaching a hand out for the door when an arm slung itself around his waist and pulled him back. He collided with a firm chest and the man's other hand traced his skin as it made its way to Kyungsoo's still outstretched hand. Goosebumps made their way all over his body when Kyungsoo's front met with the cold wooden

surface of the door, the man's body pressing flush against Kyungsoo's own.

"If you knew where you are right now, you wouldn't want to leave this room alone."

"Where am I?"

Kyungsoo tried to sound confident but failed as his voice cracked at the end of the sentence. A chuckle rumbled through the man's body and Kyungsoo unwittingly noticed how deep the stranger's voice was.

"The Underwoods. I doubt you know what that means, so I will explain. You are in the city of shapeshifters. I think you know what that means for your safety."

Kyungsoo's eyes widened and he started to hiccup, his body hyperventilating from the news. "And— and what makes it better if I stay in this room?" His usually deep voice was now reduced to a high pitched whisper.

"Oh. So you believe me. You sure are intelligent. In this room, you are safe; no one will search for you here."

They both still stood in this intimate pose and Kyungsoo felt the stranger press closer.

"How could I believe you? You're probably one of them— you should be dead. I don't even know who you are, I should be scared shitless by you— I should take you down and run for my life."

The hand on top of Kyungsoo's trailed down and locked the door while his body shook with rumble of the tall stranger's laugh. "You should be scared? So you aren't? You mean—" He took a big inhale, his nose resting on Kyungsoo's neck "—this isn't the scent of a scared and confused human? And well, as you can see, I am not dead. Neither is my kin. And... are you sure you could take me down?"

Kyungsoo bit on his lip and urged his brain for a way to come up with something to defend himself. His weekly action movie marathons with his brother should have taught him something for such situations.

In a flash, he twisted around in the man's arms and pushed with all his might until the both of them fell and Kyungsoo found himself straddling a small waist, hands on lean muscles. He couldn't know that Kai had already foreseen his actions and that the stranger was letting him have a bit fun.

"See? I am strong enough to—"

Kyungsoo couldn't finish his sentence when their positions were reversed. Kyungsoo huffed out a breath and let his head hit the floor. The shifter above him chuckled. Surprised, Kyungsoo opened his eyes again to meet red glowing irises. Now he could make out the man's facial features better; he could see a sharp chin, a straight nose and plump lips that were slightly parted.

"My name is Kai."

Kai got up swiftly and waited for Kyungsoo to get up as well, meanwhile still talking. "Now that I've told you my name, shouldn't you let me know yours too?"

It crossed his mind to help the smaller boy up, who was obviously struggling to regain his balance, but he nonetheless stood his place and continued staring. His eyes were better than any humans' at night so he could clearly see every movement Kyungsoo made. Kai saw how the shirt left Kyungsoo's collarbones open for him to see; saw the frail but not weak form of the seemingly young man. When Kyungsoo didn't answer his questions after a few seconds, he settled for continuing to explain his situation. Maybe if the human saw that his life was depending on Kai now, he would choose his actions more carefully.

"Usually, any human that sets foot in the Underwoods is killed on the spot." His sharp eyes didn't miss how Kyungsoo's body stiffened after his words. "My kin isn't as good to you humans as we once were."

He thought about what to say next and let his eyes wander through the room, crossed his arms and took a slight inhale for his next words, when the smaller one finally answered.

"Do Kyungsoo... I am Kyungsoo. And... why am I alive if what you say is true?"

Kai was very pleased that he got his answer. He let Kyungsoo's name echo in his mind, liking the sound of it. It was a name that fit the boy.

"Because I want you to be, obviously. I took you here before anyone could see you. Otherwise, you would be dead by now; and if you try to escape this room, it is only a matter of time until some wolves find you and rip you apart. Aside from that, Do Kyungsoo, how did you get here in the Underwoods?"

Kyungsoo's whole being was still tense, and he didn't know what to think in that moment if he was being honest. Why would a shifter save his life? What was his reason? Was he really safe here? What was the price and was it really worth it? Too many questions for his overstimulated brain and there were no answers that he could think of.

In the end, he decided to give in and let Kai believe that Kyungsoo trusted him, at least until he found a way to get out of here and back to his own world. He needed information, and he couldn't get it without Kai, that much was obvious. Kyungsoo licked his lips nervously and looked up, his eyes searching for Kai's figure until he saw him sitting on his armchair again, posture relaxed and red eyes fixated on him.

"I was being chased... by a shifter. I don't know how he got into our city, but when I was on my way home someone bumped into me and started growling... the next thing I knew, I was running for my life."

There were a few seconds of uncomfortable silence and Kyungsoo started fidgeting, unsure if he had said something wrong. Apparently he hadn't, Kai was simply thinking about something.

It was quite amusing for Kai to see how his presence alone seemed to get the human on edge all the time. He could understand it; who wouldn't? In this situation, it was far more surprising how level-headed Kyungsoo still was. Kai sighed and rested his head again on his palm.

"We try to control it, but there are always some hot-headed ones that manage to escape to the Upperwoods. Why? For the same reasons you humans started hunting down our kin — entirely for fun."

That got Kyungsoo's attention and he scrunched his eyebrows in confusion. "We only protected ourselves. You wolves are dangerous! You are always talking about 'you humans' but do you know what you have done to us?"

The direction of their conversation took a turn that Kai would have liked to avoid, but now that seemed impossible and Kai straightened in his seat. "We did? You should think about who started blaming everything on us shifters and—"

He didn't get to finish because someone knocked onto the door.

Kyungsoo instantly looked in his eyes with so much fear that Kai had to avert his eyes. Without looking at Kyungsoo, he stood up and headed for the door, already knowing who was there since he could figure out the person's scent even in his sleep.

"Hide in the closet," he hissed to Kyungsoo, who scampered off.

He opened the door and looked at a smiling Chanyeol. Chanyeol made a light noise and let himself in, squishing his tall body between Kai's and the doorframe. He waddled in direction of Kai's bed.

With a loud huff, he let himself plop onto his friend's bed, not caring about taking off his shoes. "Why are you sitting here in the dark? Don't tell me you already were in bed before I came in?"

Kai shut the door and flipped on the light switch. The room was now illuminated in a soft light from the single lamp that hung from the middle of the ceiling. Kai strode over to sit on the chair's armrest and stared at his friend, an eyebrow quirked. "For what reason do I have the honor of having you here at this hour?"

"Another one made it past the portal and attacked humans," his friend answered.

Chanyeol sat up and ruffled his chestnut-colored hair, making it stick in all directions. His whole appearance was too friendly for that of a soldier's. But Kai of all people was one to know that one shouldn't judge a book by its cover.

"He got killed, but now humans are searching for where he came from. The higher-ups are discussing about what to do. I think we will



have to lie low as always, and maybe the security for the portal will get tighter.” He paused for a moment and then sniffed. After that, he seemed to remember something. “Ah, was there something before I came here? I could smell your anger even meters from the door.”

“No. Nothing really. And if there was something, I already forgot it.”

It was a white lie, but he still needed time to think about what to do with his human-mate situation. He didn’t think that far when he decided to take Kyungsoo with him. It would take time to figure out their whole situation.

“But I wonder how this one got past the guards. Well, now that I think of it... if all of the young soldiers are like the students I have now, I am not really surprised.”

Kai’s lips formed a thin line as he thought of the disaster from earlier that day. His friend laughed and it got Kai to also crack a small smile.

“Me too, dude, me too. Actually, I overheard a conversation from the elders before and it seems that a few of us will get promoted soon. They talked about Oh Sehun, you and me. Seems like our hard work paid off in the end, huh?”

It wasn’t long afterwards that Chanyeol was on his way again and Kai was alone in his room again. He waited a minute to be sure and then walked over to the closet. When he opened it, he found two large orbs staring up at him and he snorted before making space for Kyungsoo to climb out of the confined space. Stretching his limbs in a timid manner, Kyungsoo studied Kai’s body.

“You overheard us, didn’t you? I’m guessing that the one we were talking about was the one who attacked you. Now it will be even harder for us to hunt in the Upperwoods.”

When Kai still felt Kyungsoo’s stare on himself, he looked up with a questioning look. Kyungsoo seemed to deliberate with himself on if he should say what was on his mind or not.

“Why didn’t your friend notice me? I mean, you are said to have a much enhanced sense of smell.”

So that was on his mind, Kai thought. It was nice to see that his human wasn't stupid, but he couldn't help but think that it would be a hassle sooner or later when Kyungsoo would think too much and do things he shouldn't. First, however, he needed to confirm how much exactly Kyungsoo knew.

"What do you know about us?"

After taking a shuddering breath Kyungsoo took a seat on the bed and answered. "Almost nothing. Shifters are a sensitive topic in our society. We know that you betrayed us, that you had better senses than we do in your human forms too and what you looked like in your wolf forms. That's about all I know."

Kai wasn't surprised that shifters were an avoided topic. "You got a long way to go, Do Kyungsoo. Since you can't leave this room for the next unknown time, you may want to know what about all the rumors are true." Kai stood up and made his way over to Kyungsoo and sat beside him. "And about Chanyeol..."

Kyungsoo suppressed his urge to inch away from the shifter.

"He didn't smell you because you have my scent on you."

When Kyungsoo looked confused, Kai took the cue to go more into detail. He reached for Kyungsoo's hand and slowly let their hands wander up to Kyungsoo's neck, where he pressed it against a certain spot. Kyungsoo's eyes widened further, if that was even possible, and he probed spot with his fingers where marks of teeth were imprinted. His head shot in Kai's direction again with a silent plead for an explanation.

"That is a claim mark. It makes you smell like me and you will feel my presence in a certain distance around you."

It was only half of the truth, but Kyungsoo didn't need to know too many details yet. Kai was slowly getting more and more confused at how unreactive the boy was. He wasn't screaming and demanding that Kai let him go and he also didn't object against anything the soldier had said.

After seconds of staring at how Kyungsoo touched the claim mark, he decided against worrying for now.

While shaking his head and making his way to the door, he said, “I need to do something, I won’t be back soon. Sleep the while and don’t make any noise or cause any trouble. If someone knocks, don’t answer. And never—” Kai halted and threw Kyungsoo a warning glance “—never leave this room except if you have a sudden urge to throw yourself into death’s embrace. Understood?”

Kyungsoo nodded, shell-shocked, and couldn’t help himself but think that maybe Kai himself would be his death.

Kai took his word and wasn’t back until the early morning hours.

Kyungsoo woke up from his place in the corner of the bed when he heard the soft thumps of Kai carelessly throwing his shoes in random directions and letting his jacket fall to the floor. The soldier made his way to the armchair and fell onto the soft pollsters, moving a bit until he found a good position and not much later, he was seemingly asleep. Still being tired himself, Kyungsoo let his eyes linger on Kai until his eyes fell shut again and he welcomed sleep once more.

Though his dreams were plagued by recent memories of being chased and other, older ones when he was in front of his parents and felt their hate and disgust towards himself, he managed to sleep without making a fuss. His mind still on edge and every false movement would awake him in a matter of seconds.

The first few days proceeded with caution and Kyungsoo slept the day away to be able to be awake through the night when Kai would be back. He couldn’t help but distrust Kai to not do anything to him when and if he turned his back to the soldier. He was a wolf after all, a traitor for all Kyungsoo was told. Though in the end, he only achieved messing up his sleeping habits entirely until he found out that Kai had an ever-changing schedule.

They never have a proper conversation. Over time, Kyungsoo finds himself going as far as to pretend that the other doesn’t exist.

There was also almost nothing to do in the small room. Only the bed and an average closet occupied the room besides the overflowing desk in front of the small window that barely did its job to let in light from outside. The only other utensils were a slightly bigger-than-usual pot for washing and a can with fresh water beside the closet that Kai refilled every two or three days. Even a stranger would see that the resident of this room was a busy person.

Days went by and Kyungsoo, slowly but surely, got used to Kai's presence. Not that he liked it in particular but there was nothing to be done about it. The soldier tried to gain his trust with small actions such as bringing him little gifts when he could, or asking about his wellbeing — how could Kyungsoo not reconsider his behavior towards Kai?

One afternoon, while cursing his aching back, Kyungsoo had the genius idea to do some research while Kai was away and figure out how to escape.

From that moment on, Kyungsoo would always wander around the room for hours, searching for useful information and something to do. He ended up cleaning the room most of the time.

Luckily, he found a few books on Kai's desk and secretly studied them with the goal to extend his knowledge about wolves. The books were journals as he found out later. They consisted about daily reports of Kai and his military life, sometimes also small notes about his worries and future plans.

When day and night started to mix up with each other, he always found himself so emerged in reading that he was almost walked in upon by Kai a multitude of times and as a result he often hastily had to put the book in its original place.

Like Kai said, he really was able to sense the soldier even when he wasn't yet in sight. Sometimes he even knew how Kai's mood was when he was out on his duties. It scared Kyungsoo to no end but it also came quite in handy when he snuck through the soldiers belongings without asking. But he didn't know that Kai knew very well what he was doing. He smelled Kyungsoo's faint unique scent on his leather journals every time he came back to his room.

And who could judge Kyungsoo for wanting to do something when he was confined all day in the small room with a tiny window, too high for Kyungsoo to reach?

Sometimes, Kai felt guilty.

On those days, he would get Kyungsoo something more special to eat or if he was lucky to get one, even a book. So it happened that after about a month, Kyungsoo had his own leather-bound journal and

two pencils to write, along with a thicker blanket and a sweater from Kai that he now claimed as his own. Now being able to write, he started noting small details about his every day with Kai.

Over time they also started opening up to one another, one more than the other. Sometimes, one of them would be stating answers that weren't completely honest, but not entirely lies either.

For Kyungsoo, this was enough. He didn't need much more to live, and he appreciated the other's kindness.

"It has been nagging at me for a while now..." Kai had come back from his morning patrol and sat in his usual place in the armchair. "Why are you so calm? I expected you to try to escape at least once by now. Honestly, it scares me how you remain like a trapped princess, obedient and silent."

Kyungsoo choked on air and made an offended face. "I am not a princess, Kai!"

Kai chuckled and Kyungsoo did too. It was then that Kyungsoo grew internally worried. He was too used to Kai being nice that he almost forgot that he was a wolf, that he should be a foe to Kyungsoo.

"My parents abandoned me after I told them I am not into girls."

The soldier raised his eyebrows and frowned, but Kyungsoo continued talking, "Now that I think of it, I never felt attracted to anyone the way I always wanted to. Well, the day after my confession, they were away and I was alone. They packed their things over night and disappeared."

The boy looked up and their eyes met. One pair was full of disgust mixed with hidden concern to hear about such a situation; the mirroring pair showing only an already healed soul.

"I guess it's a better final chapter than them being violent."

That had Kai shrugging and both turned back to their current activities: Kai shifting his attention to the notes he wrote regarding the meeting that day and Kyungsoo secretly sketching the soldier's profile on a free page in his journal. Another thing that made both of them content with each other was that the other always knew when the

conversation has ended or when it was not a good idea to delve further.

While Kai's body reached its limits over time, Kyungsoo grew comfortable with the circumstances. The thought of escaping crossed his mind only once every few days, instead the the feeling of being protected and pampered taking hold. It wasn't appropriate for a prisoner of sorts to be so unfazed by his situation.

But there was Kyungsoo. Slowly, he learned about the true history of both races the replace biased teachings fromhis world.

If he had to be honest, Kai was more interesting to him. Everything about the soldier was alluring and Kyungsoo found himself drawn like a moth to the light. But it was hard to get anything out of the soldier. The conversations would always end with Kyungsoo stumbling over his words in attempt to explain himself under the piercing gaze of red irises and minimum information about Kai.

He only knew Kai was a high ranking soldier and a shapeshifter. At first it was enough when he wasn't planning on staying, but lately not anymore. Kyungsoo was craving to find more about Kai's intentions after he began to place trust in the man that promised him protection.

Another evening Kai was half-lying on his chair — literally the only place in the room where he lounge — with a book over his face to act as a guise for the weariness that overtook Kai. It wasn't easy for a shifter to stay away from his mate, especially not when the submissive was already claimed and in easy reach. The skin on his usually tan face looked slightly sick and uncharacteristically pale and his eyes had heavy bags. It left Kyungsoo worrying.

Kyungsoo was drawing again — his new favorite distraction from boredom — and silently pondered how to wrench something about Kai of the man. Maybe now Kai's guard was down with him being so exhausted. It was worth a shot, wasn't it?

“...Kai?” There was a quiet grumbling that had Kyungsoo cracking a smile. “What is your status?”

He watched intently how the other would react. To his surprise, the other's lips formed a tired smile, nothing else.

“What do you think, Kyungsoo?”

That had Kyungsoo gaping a bit. Would he make Kai mad if he answered incorrectly? But Kai asked him and how would he know...

“Well... you are a soldier... maybe a beta? I read that mostly betas are usual soldiers...” As soon as the words slipped past his lips, he remembered the first time he laid eyes on Kai and how dominating his whole presence had been. “Oh my god, I am sorry I—”

It was the second time in total that Kai had ever lain hands on Kyungsoo. The human found himself with his back pressed to the mattress and an exhausted looking Kai hovering over himself, inhaling Kyungsoo’s scent without any shame or sense for personal space.

“Tell me, Kyungsoo. What am I?”

Kai’s behavior only made it more obvious that Kyungsoo made a mistake. The shifter slowly got down and rested onto his elbows, tracing human’s collarbones up to the claim mark with his nose. Soft whispers of “Tell me, Kyungsoo...” and ‘What am I?’ continued to roll past those plump lips that brushed once a while over sensitive skin. It had Kyungsoo choke out an “Alpha!” in a matter of seconds, he himself not knowing if he had the guts to push Kai away or give in and pull him closer.

“Good.”

With that, Kai retreated to his usual place as if nothing happened and left Kyungsoo staring at the ceiling, breathing uneven. But if he thought he had defeated Kyungsoo for now, he was wrong. As fast as he could, Kyungsoo pulled himself together and sat up again, this time leaning against the wall behind him.

“And what do you do all the time when you are out?”

“Kyungsoo, you shouldn’t dig your grave deeper than it already is.”

This time Kyungsoo wasn’t going to give in again. He figured he would never get delve deeper into the mystery that was Kai otherwise. “You said I would die if I step out of this room, didn’t you? As if it would change anything if you told me more about yourself.”

Kai sighed resignedly. After all, it was only been a matter of time until Kyungsoo would have asked that.

“We both know that isn’t the question you wanted to ask me.” Instead of stopping at Kyungsoo’s confused expression, he continued with a question himself, “Have you read about wolves and their mates?”

The boy blinked, confused, but nodded nonetheless. Kai seemed relieved at that and leaned forward a bit, seemingly staring into the human’s soul.

“You are my mate. That is why I took you in instead of killing you like I should have all those weeks ago. Whether you believe me or not is your choice.”

Maybe I’ll get you out of my head. — *END OF THE FIRST CHAPTER.*

*a/n: Hello Hello~*

*Finally the first chapter is up! I hope very much you like it and please remember that this has not been read beta yet, so mistakes may linger there somewhere. (I over-read it once but well yea^^ “)*

*Have a nice day and I will upload the second chapter next friday! <3*

— *Smile*



## Chapter 3

---

02

What can I say when I know you're not here to stay?

Even though Kai had already left the room a few minutes ago, Kyungsoo remained sitting in the closet.

After Kai had admitted that Kyungsoo was his mate, Kyungsoo didn't have any time to respond with something because suddenly someone was pounding on the door and shouting for Kai to hurry because there was an emergency. Kai had shot a worried glance at the closet where his mate was and then grabbed his jacket to follow Chanyeol, shutting the door with a loud thud.

Honestly, Kyungsoo wasn't sure if he welcomed the following silence or if it made everything just so much worse. His mind stumbled over too many thoughts and sensations at once, making him whimper and draw his knees closer to his chest in a desperate attempt to find comfort.

What seemed like hours later, he decided to crawl his way out of the small space to retrieve his — originally Kai's — sweater from the corner of the bed and nestled himself deep into the fabric, inhaling Kai's scent (the soldier still wore it sometimes). Repeating Kai's last words over and over again in his head, Kyungsoo tried to digest them. He knew it was possible for a shifter to have a human mate — it seemed to have happened quite often in the earlier days from what he had read. But was it true? Was he really Kai's mate?

It would explain why he saved Kyungsoo and why he took the risk of receiving the death penalty for those hiding humans or siding with them. It would also mean that he lied about the mark on the human's neck, as Kyungsoo had expected from the start. All he could find about markings were claim marks and they had the same features that he experienced with Kai. Kyungsoo's small body started rocking back and forth as he went through everything he knew about mates, checking down an imaginary list.

Slowly, realization crept through his brain and he closed his eyes tiredly, a smile tugging at his lips while he made his decision. Letting

his body fall to the side clumsily, the boy made up his mind to give the alpha a piece of his mind later — *his alpha*.

Fatigue painted Kai's features as he stepped into the room, his shoulders tense and his eyes tired after four hours of discussing problem after problem with the anxious and angered higher-ups. It was during these times that he wasn't thankful for his position; he had to push his body further and further past the limit to fulfill his duty in the pack. Letting the door slam shut, he let his body collide with the wood and his knees gave in, making his back slide down the surface until he was slumped on the floor against the door with outstretched legs and his head hanging low.

His body was ready to sleep in that position. Kai nearly didn't have sufficient energy to focus on the sounds of rustling sheets that came about half a minute later. He only raised his head the slightest bit when two small palms cupped his cheeks and pulled him forward a bit. Too tired to even react, Kai's eyes only stared back at the two dark orbs that he had learned to love so much.

His face was lifted up a bit more and then Kyungsoo leaned forward to press his lips softly onto Kai's, who was enjoying the softness of his mate's tender touch. He slowly reached for one of Kyungsoo's palms.

"Rest, Kai. You need proper sleep. Come on," Kyungsoo murmured.

The soldier was pulled up with great effort on his mate's side as Kyungsoo guided him towards the bed. When Kai was lying comfortably down and almost entirely hidden beneath the blanket except for his face, Kyungsoo moved towards for the chair where Kai always sat. Long fingers closed over his wrist, stopping him, and he turned around to face Kai. He felt goosebumps spread over his skin. Unwavering red eyes stared at him with an unspoken plead and the human found himself moving toward *his alpha* and got pulled down beside the shifter.

"Stay with me... please."

The smaller could only hum lightly in agreement and close his eyes as warmth instantly encased his smaller form. The whole situation would probably have no good ending for both of them. Luck wouldn't always be on their side; but for now, both were content with each other.

One, to finally having his destined mate near, charging his heart anew with much needed strength.

The other one trying to follow what his heart seemed to deem right for as long as he — *they* — had the chance to do so.

The following morning, Kyungsoo woke and wondered if it all had been just a dream. Absentmindedly, he wondered what got into him to push the whole situation forward so fast. Did he choose the right path?

He rolled over onto his left side, the other side having already lost feeling from lying on them for so long without moving. An arm wound itself around the human's waist and had Kyungsoo's eyes shooting open once more. Feeling Kai's steady breathing against his neck, he knew that it hadn't been a dream and that Kai really was behind him right now.

"I know you are awake," Kai said.

"Well, I wasn't trying to hide it," Kyungsoo admitted and let his body get pulled closer to his mate's firm chest.

Neither one of them said anything for the next few minutes, only basking in the warmth of each other for a little bit longer. If they could escape reality for a bit more, both were willing to do so.

The evening before, Kyungsoo had understood that every time when Kai would sit on his chair for hours and not move elsewhere, it wasn't to have Kyungsoo in his sight but to respect the human's privacy. Kyungsoo had been the one to avoid Kai at first. Kai only had picked up on the hints and had chosen to give the human what he wished for without complaint because that's just how Kai is; silent with actions full of meaning and thoughts behind them.

When the shifter moved again to lay on his back, his arm left its place on his mate's body.

"Are you okay with that, Kyungsoo?"

Kai's deep voice was steady and he probably tried to make it sound like he was okay, when actually, his insides were churning with worry that the human would back out again. He wouldn't be able to cope if

everything just happened because of the heat of the moment.

Kyungsoo sat up, the blanket slipping off his upper body and effectively making the human shudder a bit from the cold. Even when he couldn't go outside, he still felt the temperature drop steadily each day.

"I am fine, Kai, really. I don't know why you are acting like this has made a huge impact on my situation."

"You are indeed aware that you turned your back towards your own race the moment you submitted to me?"

Kai seemed worried. His human mate couldn't see much sense in it. They had limited time regardless whether he chose to submit or not. Neither of them knew when something could happen and they were forced to look truth in the eye.

"Then don't make me regret it," Kyungsoo replied while imitating Kai's serious face. When he couldn't hold the façade anymore, he cracked a gentle smile. "I am not stupid, Kai. And I chose to trust you."

If Kyungsoo had ever thought he had seen Kai in his best and most handsome state, he now took it back because he was dazed as his alpha cracked the most adorable smile the human had ever seen in his entire life. The shifter looked utterly beautiful — *ethereal* even.

The alpha took a hold of Kyungsoo's wrist and pulled him back onto his body to share his warmth. Thanks to his shifter genes, he wasn't as affected by the cold as his mate was.

"I know you must be confused but I thought that it was worth a try. I am going to die sooner or later anyway and I don't want to spend my last seconds regretting that I only sat here and made you suffer while you were practically walking on eggshells every day because of me." Kyungsoo pushed his bashfulness into the back of his head and snuggled closer to Kai. "I admit all this developed very fast. I also know I was supposed to react... differently."

Kai hummed in agreement but didn't say anything. It left both of them to their thoughts until Kyungsoo fell asleep again.

Kai stood up and proceeded to gently cover his mate with the covers. He went on with getting himself ready for another exhausting day.

He closed the door after himself before he made his way through the other cabins, deep in thought. He was thankful for Kyungsoo for being so open-minded about it all but it scared him nonetheless. He was willing to trust his mate even if he was a human, but betrayal had already happened once in the history of their races. Now he felt stupid. He alone was the one who had decided to give it a shot and now he was also the one having doubts.

Kai had always been a person that followed orders and enjoyed having everything under control, whether it was his emotions or his tasks; it was quite new to him to act depending on his own emotions. He always had been told that the only thing that mattered was what the higher-ups said. Their choices were always correct and he did the right thing by being obedient and following their orders, like he was supposed to, without a mistake. But lately there were so many feelings he couldn't name; should he act upon them? How? Maybe they were wrong and he would ruin everything he had achieved until now.

Kai sighed and remained oblivious of the someone's presence nearing him. It was only when Chanyeol bumped into him that his instincts kicked in. He was too late and so he found himself in a headlock barely a moment later.

"I never thought a day would come when I would snag you like this!" Chanyeol laughed loudly and wiggled his upper body to aggravate the fellow soldier a bit more.

But karma is never a friend and Chanyeol soon found himself on the dirty ground with Kai straddling his back and twisting his arm back in a painful manner; he wasn't even using his full strength.

"Okay, okay, *okay*— I take it back! That hurts, ow, ow!"

Kai smirked and remained in his place while Chanyeol struggled under him. Just because he could; and really, Chanyeol needed a reminder that he shouldn't mess with his best friend.

When he deemed it enough, he let go and stood up, not forgetting to hold out a hand for Chanyeol to help him get up too. Both soldiers laughed and continued walking while Chanyeol threw an arm over

Kai's shoulders. With his other hand, he tried to get rid of the mud on his face.

"You seem to have an awful lot of free time, my friend. Every time I see you, you have nothing to do and no place to be at," Kai teased.

"That's not true. Our schedules just happen to be planned so that one of us is always free for an unexpected emergency and the other one is supervising the lower ranks," Chanyeol reminded.

"I was just joking. Say, Yeol, how are things going with your search? Have you found your mate yet?"

The taller male made a gurgling noise and shook his head dismissively. "I found him. Yes, him. My mate's a male. Not that I mind, but his level of sass makes me wonder how I should even try to court him."

Not too far in front of them, Kai's students could already be seen. He slowed down a bit.

The young wolves had advanced a lot over time and only a few were left that still held grudges against him; and he was grateful for that, but it didn't make up for the fact that he wasn't in the mood to teach. He never was, to be honest, but today it was even more obvious.

The soldier only had stopped making a fuss after he had found Kyungsoo, because he had a tad more time for his human mate that way. Before, he always would have been in a foul mood because he was a *fighter*. His place was on the battlefield or at least with his troops.

Though now he realized that the training of the young wolves was also extremely important. After all, one day he'd die and someone would have to replace him.

Kai had zoned out during his friend's monologue but was dragged back to the present when Chanyeol pulled back his arm and stood in front of him.

"And you? What about your mate?"

That brought him back to what he was thinking of before he got interrupted. “Don’t know. I’ll probably stay alone forever and serve our force.”

He shrugged and after that, they both dismissed each other with a wave. While on his way, Kai tried to motivate himself.

“Are you ready, students?” he called out.

When they all noticed him and started growling playfully as an answer, Kai for once thought that maybe — just *maybe* — it wasn’t that bad to not to be at the frontlines.

“We have different rankings for our soldiers. For example, I have an A rank. The rank doesn’t represent if you’re an Alpha or a Beta, in rare cases even an Omega. It only shows your influence and shows what decisions you are allowed to make alone. If you are a C rank soldier, your opinions and actions don’t have the same weight as the ones of a rank B or A soldier. The higher your rank is, the more your missions and tasks are of importance and the expectations are higher.”

Kai paused to look over his food at Kyungsoo, half-heartedly expecting the human to look confused or bored, but he was caught off guard by seeing that Kyungsoo had stopped eating and was waiting eagerly for him to go on. Coughing awkwardly, Kai shifted his attention back again on his plate.

“There aren’t many wolves with A ranks, actually,” he continued. “Many of us have what it takes but are too hot-headed and impulsive. Higher than A-ranking soldiers are Lieutenants. Depending on your work area, there are usually one or two Lieutenants who help the Higher-Ups with the execution of instructions. Currently, our area’s are discussing the potential promotions for Chanyeol and I.”

“And what are your orders right now? When I asked you yesterday, you didn’t give me an answer,” Kyungsoo reminded him and smiled. “Congratulations! Isn’t it something good to get promoted? It would give you more freedom, wouldn’t it?”

There was that curious side of Kyungsoo again, eager to learn and understand.

“It would. I always fulfill my orders without thinking much about

it, so you can imagine I could care less about my position. I do what I am told to and that is probably exactly what they like about me,” He answered and when he saw that Kyungsoo still wasn’t eating he chuckled and poked the others plate. “Eat, Kyungsoo. You’ve been getting skinnier these days and the fact that you can’t exercise isn’t helping it.”

Kyungsoo caught the guilty undertone in Kai’s voice and looked down at his plate to continue eating. He knew Kai wasn’t happy to have Kyungsoo confined like a pet, even if it was for his own safety.

Pleased to see that the human resumed eating, Kai answered the former question. “At the moment, I am training the younger wolves that recently became of age. Usually we have a teacher for them, but he got attacked during a mission in the Upperwoods a few months ago and is still recovering.”

Their conversation continued, Kyungsoo soaking up all the information happily. Kai noticed he himself had stopped eating to talk and decided to give his place to his mate.

“Here. Eat and stay healthy.” When he saw that Kyungsoo was about to decline, he placed a finger over his mate’s lips to stop him from talking. “Do it for me, ’kay?”

That did it and Kyungsoo accepted the food while grumbling unhappily.

“The next few days, our shares will probably lessen; our supplies are nearly used up,” Kai announced softly.

“Why’s that?” Kyungsoo had an idea why because of something Kai mentioned some time ago, but he didn’t want to jump into any conclusions.

“As we predicted, after your incident, the humans were more aware that there may be a few shifters left in the Upperwoods. Before, there were only some, but now their numbers have increased. We plan on laying low and hunting less in the Upperwoods, but that strains our supplies a lot; and with that many enemies, hunting is becoming nearly impossible.”

“I’m sorry...”



It wasn't Kyungsoo's fault, he knew that very well, but he still felt responsible for the circumstances and his eyes shone with unshed tears that he tried to hide. Kai sighed.

"You persuaded me into being open and honest with you. Don't make me go back on my word."

The shifter put a palm on his mate's cheek and softly caressed it. Nodding, Kyungsoo tried to come up with something else. He had to be brave for Kai.

"Tell me... how is it outside...?"

"You would love it, I am sure. Over time, it will snow. I can sense it. Winters in the Underwoods are beautiful— everything is white and the air is moist and deliciously fresh and clear..."

Over the next month Kyungsoo's and Kai's relationship stabilized. Though the exchange of body contact continued to be at its very minimum, both were fine with their current situation. They talked more and Kyungsoo was becoming more open about telling Kai about his life before the accident. It was nothing special or much — actually quite ordinary and boring in Kyungsoo's opinion — but Kai wanted to know it all. And while Kyungsoo was doing his best to let Kai get closer to him, Kai still wasn't willing to share *everything* with Kyungsoo. It made the human think it was his fault and search for any mistake he may or may not have done unconsciously.

And since Kyungsoo had more than enough time to think things over when Kai was away, he came to the conclusion that maybe Kai was dissatisfied with him being self-conscious and subtly shying away from touches that exceeded a short and innocent hug. That brought him back to his earlier thoughts how Kai had always cut down his own urges to make Kyungsoo comfortable. Having made his decision once again, he happily waited for Kai to return, hoping to surprise Kai.

The soldier barely had made it past the door when Kyungsoo jumped at him with a big smile on his face. "You're back!" Obviously surprised but doing nothing to show he was uncomfortable, Kai replied while caging Kyungsoo in his arms. "Yeah, I am. Were you that bored without me?" Kyungsoo nodded and ignored the blush coming up his face with his unusual behavior as for he was clinging on Kai's waist with each one of his legs on either side and had his arms resting

on broad shoulders. He wasn't accustomed to skin-ship of sorts, never had had a person where he really wanted to be this close.

Kai brushed the action off with the thought that Kyungsoo had been just really bored out of his mind and made his way over to the armchair to set his mate off on the armrest. When Kyungsoo was sated upon the armrest and Kai was about to put some space between them, the human reached for his neck and pulled him down to kiss him chastely. It felt better than he had anticipated and shortly after he had pulled back, he dived in again to press his warm and soft lips onto cold and chapped ones. He felt the shifter stiffen during the first act and slowly relaxing into the second kiss.

When they finally separated from each other after a few more innocent pecks, Kyungsoo's eyes followed the movement of Kai's tongue coming out and moistening his own lips. "What was that for?" Now embarrassed Kyungsoo shifted his eyes towards his fingers and willed himself not to back out again, for Kai's sake. 'Didn't you like it?' He heard a huff and he was forced to look up when Kai took a hold of his chin gently. "I did. I was just... surprised."

Now a bit braver, Kyungsoo reached up to place a gentle kiss on Kai's collarbone. When there wasn't any negative reaction he resumed to kiss up to Kai's chin. When he mindlessly continued and reached the section behind Kai's ear, he was taken aback by a light growl that rumbled through his body. He hadn't picked up that Kai's breathing had sped up and he seemed to hold himself back from the flexing in his arm muscles. "...Kai?" Kyungsoo looked up innocently and with wide eyes.

"That's enough for today." The soldier's voice was firm when he determinedly sat Kyungsoo back on the armrest and turned around to quickly make his way in long strides to his closet. Confused Kyungsoo stood up too and went beside his mate. 'What is it Kai? Did I do something wrong?' The shifter's jaw was tense when he shook his head in denial and brushed past Kyungsoo to his chair. With furrowed eyebrows Kyungsoo watched Kai as he took one of his journals and started writing, completely ignoring him. The sudden change in Kai's behavior irked him seriously. "Come on, Kai! Talk to me!" Kyungsoo tried once again but let out a frustrated sigh when no answer came.

He settled to go to sleep and hoped that Kai would be back to his usual self the next day.

The next day when he woke up Kai wasn't there but had left the human's breakfast on the table already. Sighing, he pushed the worries to the back of his mind and ate his food on the bed after taking it and his journal from the desk. He wrote down what had happened and read over it, over and over again, to maybe understand what happened.

He would talk to Kai about it when the shifter returned this evening.

The chance to talk didn't come however.

Kai seemed even busier now. He didn't come home until Kyungsoo was fast asleep and would be on his way already when Kyungsoo woke up. But he never forgot to bring food for his mate every morning and evening. Kyungsoo couldn't help but wonder if it was his fault that Kai was acting different from before, but even he knew the chances were slim that it really was his doing instead of just another emergency that called for the soldiers' presence.

After a week, their first argument happened.

Kai had been at home for the first time after what felt like an eternity, and Kyungsoo was thankful of that. It seemed like the air was clear of any misunderstandings and the human wanted it to stay this way. They even talked about his days and what he had accomplished every time he had been out on his duty. It relieved Kyungsoo to no end that it really had been other circumstances instead of his mistake that had required Kai to be away.

He still didn't know what had been his mistake, but he would try to avoid it another time.

While Kai talked about one of his students that had managed to catch him in a fight off guard and how much they all had improved their skills, a thought crossed Kyungsoo's mind. He looked up and caught Kai smiling lightly to himself. He never had heard any of his history teachers say anything nice about shape shifters and after all this time Kyungsoo found himself running out of compliments for Kai. Even if only a small part of the shifters population was like Kai, Kyungsoo thought, humans have lost a lot when they started hunting them.

"Say, Kai, can you shift into a wolf too?" Kai stopped midway his

movement and the smile disappeared. Scared to have said something wrong again, Kyungsoo rushed out with an explanation. “Sorry if I said something to offend you, I just thought about it the last few days and I think it is an amazing power to be able to change and I wondered how you looked like and if you were as big as the one I saw before and—”, Kyungsoo continued rambling on, having already lost track of what he was saying. He only stopped to take a huge breath and look up at Kai.

His face looked neutral and from the look in his red glowing eyes the human could see he already had his walls back up again. Kyungsoo probably had screwed up again, but instead of apologizing he remembered how he had felt when he was left alone without any explanation *if* he even had done something wrong. He couldn’t be cautious if he didn’t know about *what*.

And Kyungsoo had had enough of feeling insecure every day — he wanted answers.

“Please, Kai.” The shifter looked up and stared blankly at his human mate. ‘Please talk to me. I’ve had enough not knowing what I am allowed to do and what not. Your behavior is the worst, really.’ Kyungsoo looked down. “I don’t want to be the only one that tries...”

When he heard a sigh he looked up and felt tears form behind his eyelids when Kai abandoned his food and walked away. Frustrated Kyungsoo looked at the bread before him and hardly suppressed his tears. He didn’t know what to do and what to say anymore.

“Come here, ’Soo.”

Caught by surprise, Kyungsoo’s head shot up and he saw Kai sitting on the bed, back leaning against the wall and a hand outstretched for him. As fast as the human could he scrambled to stand up and hurried his way over to the alpha. Practically gluing himself to Kai’s side, Kyungsoo didn’t care that it was out of character for him. He *needed* the comfort that the alphas’ strong body radiated, badly.

“I am sorry for worrying you. You can probably imagine, but it is hard for me to adapt. I’ve never been in such a situation or been taught what to do.” Kai took one of the smaller one’s hands and softly ran his thumb over the soft skin. “I’ve always had a solution when I was in need of one. I always knew what was expected from me, and what I would face. And most importantly, I always had full control

over my actions.”

“But now with you, I don’t know what will happen next. I don’t see a definite end. I don’t know what a relationship expects from me and I have little to no control of my actions. I’ve been taught humans are our foes, but then I unexpectedly meet one and he’s my mate...” Taking one of his hands from where they rested on Kyungsoo’s, he rubbed over his eyes tiredly. “I am scared that, the more you learn about me, the more you know about the real me, the more you will acknowledge that I am a monster and it all was a mistake.”

“Thanks for telling me... I appreciate it...” Kyungsoo whispered and nestled himself more into Kai’s warmth. ‘And I won’t ever regret the way things are between us. I think, maybe I already know more about the real you than all the others out there. Just because you have another appearance I won’t leave you behind. Not that I could, really, you are kind of charming in your own way.’ Kyungsoo winked and Kai laughed. “You think so?” He couldn’t stop chuckling and patted Kyungsoo’s head when the human nodded.

They cuddled in silence for a while. Kai was thinking about nothing in particular. He finally was in peace with his own mind, the first time since a while. But Kyungsoo was thinking about if he should mention the accident from a week ago or let it go. “Why have you been avoiding me after... you know, I kissed you?”

Kai rumbled a bit and a very light, almost invisible, blush crept up his cheeks. He grumbled something what Kyungsoo knew was the answer, but he couldn’t quite catch it. Nudging him lightly once to repeat it, Kyungsoo looked up at him. “I needed to... calm down to keep us safe.” The soldier started and searched for words. “It would have been hard to explain the others why... my cabin was surrounded by the scent of arousal and mating...” He coughed awkwardly and shielded his face from his human mate with both hands. “That’s seriously embarrassing.”

Kyungsoo stared at Kai. Kai moved his fingers a bit to peak past them, and that was when Kyungsoo understood it all and started laughing like mad. He didn’t know when had been the last time he had laughed so wholeheartedly over something, but this was just hilarious. This soldier who had seen sorrow and death was embarrassed and helpless about love-matters. Totally pushing aside that he had the same problems, he continued to cackle over a now sullen Kai until he had problems getting air. “Okay, so I see it amuses

you to no end.”

Sensing he was going overboard, Kyungsoo tried to stop, but every time he got up and looked at Kai and his wide eyes, he fell back and started to laugh again. “Oh god, I can’t stop laughing. I’m so sorry!” Unknown to his human mate the shifter moved and crawled over the human’s body to silence him some other way.

When Kyungsoo felt lips on his own, felt them forcing him to move with them, he finally got distracted enough to reincorporate and kissed Kai back with sudden feverish passion. Both of them were inexperienced, that was for sure, but they would learn and grow with each other.

Mornings were now spend with shy kisses that grew longer over time and maybe sessions of cuddling until Kai had to go. For Kai it was heaven and Kyungsoo also enjoyed it a lot. He even got more accustomed to the feeling of their bodies slotted together on the bed when he was being extra cuddly. If you would have asked Kyungsoo an year ago if he would ever be the type to cuddle, he would have said no, because why would one cuddle? There is no reason for it.

Now he could see what people meant when they said it was hard to stay away from one’s lover. Kai was his *lover*. The word always made Kyungsoo giggle at random times and earn him an amused look from his mate. But not everything was all glitter and rainbows outside their room.

Like Kai predicted, the supplies were strained and the portions getting smaller.

It led to Kai offering Kyungsoo more from his own food every day to keep the human healthy. Kyungsoo felt terrible because of it. He only sat at their room, cleaned and read to overcome time while Kai was actually active and completed task after task and trained. But the shifter would hear none of it and always somehow coax Kyungsoo into eating.

Eventually the day both of them had silently dreaded for, came, and Kai explained his mate he had to go to the Upperwoods to hunt. “We are a good team; we’ve been hunting many times together before.” The alpha tried to sound positive. He wasn’t scared for himself; he just didn’t know if it would be alright for Kyungsoo. He

had already managed to get some portions of food for Kyungsoo to eat for the next three to four days, but what if something happened that they weren't expecting?

On the other side Kyungsoo also wasn't worried for his own good, but his mate's. His alpha had told him about the movements in the Upperwoods and that the humans were getting more aggressive. The former team that went hunting got killed entirely and now humans were more intent on finding their hiding place. Harder times called for more experienced shifters and now Kai had been tasked to lead the new team with another A rank soldier called Sehun.

"I am scared, Kai! Please don't let them do anything to you..." He didn't know when he had started to resent humans almost as much as a shifter would, but when he heard about all the hardships Kai had to go through because of them, when he saw all the scars every time Kai changed his clothes, he didn't know anymore who of them were the real monsters.

He felt his mate pull him in for a hug and melted against the warmth that was Kai's body, focused on the dance that his muscles were doing under the fabric and the steady heartbeat. "I won't, Kyungsoo, I won't. Don't worry about me, okay?" Even when he knew he couldn't promise that, Kyungsoo nodded and buried his face into the fabric of Kai's jacket again.

When Kai departed Kyungsoo cried silently, with his back on the door and hands shielding his face, as tears streamed down his face in pure agony.

When did it happen that his feelings got so out of control? — He didn't know.

Kai had told him it would take a maximum of four days for them to come back to the Underwoods.

But it had been six days and Kyungsoo had ran out of food the day before, trying to keep his stomach sated somehow with water, which was now close to running out too. Halfway through the week he had given up to keep himself entertained and slept most of the time. He dreamt of Kai, sometimes of the days back in his city, sometimes also from back then when his parents haven't hated and abandoned him.

On the seventh day — Kai finally returned. Kyungsoo had awoken

from his light slumber when the door was opened and Kai had set foot inside his cabin. He had started crying when he noticed the bandages under Kai's clothes. Sitting on the bed like a child, with both arms outstretched for Kai to hold him, he cried for the next hour while Kai rocked him gently from side to side and hummed a gentle melody.

Later on he had showered Kai's face with kisses until the soldier was lying under him on the bed and chuckled lightly, hearing out every little thankful word Kyungsoo muttered to him under his breath. "I am okay, Kyungsoo." Calloused fingers ran through Kyungsoo's dark hair, which was too long by now and already fell into his eyes. "What took you so long?" His mate replied instead of straight-out asking about the wounds. Waiting patiently for the explanation, he let his alpha sit up and move to sit cross-legged in front of him.

"Things were going well; we have gotten a lot of prey in the Upperwoods and managed to get most of it ported down." Kai pulled Kyungsoo onto his chest and resumed talking. "When we were about to portal the last bit of our prey down here, only Sehun and I were left to guard the portal and some hunters found us. I apparently don't know how, but they did. In order to distract them from the portal we fled and fought on our way, so the job could be completed when the others would come take the rest of our prey and close the portal." He finished and shrugged.

Kai didn't resume talking, so Kyungsoo did. "I can tell that isn't the whole story." Kai let out a groan and pinched Kyungsoo's arm. "Why did I get such a bright bulb as a mate, hm?" He grinned when Kyungsoo punched him lightly on the arm. "Sehun and I got into a trap and had to plan our escape for two days before we could make it out. After we had shifted to our human forms, they kind of... interrogated us to talk where our pack was, that's why it took so long. But they didn't know that we were trained to stay silent under such circumstances, so they were really aggravated when neither of us said a word after all."

"That's why you are bandaged all over..." Kyungsoo shuddered under the mention of Kai's 'training'. Running his fingers over Kai's upper body down to his stomach to distract himself, he felt the outlines of his mate's ribs. "At least you can eat properly now. I won't accept any of your food now, are we clear?"

It's been almost half a year now.



Time with Kai flew by fast though he still hasn't set a foot past their cabin's door. It was odd to live like that for so long, to think that everything that lurked outside the four walls would kill him in an instant, and yet be so comfortable.

"Is there a way for me to turn into a shifter too?" Kyungsoo rolled onto his stomach and observed his mate's face under the few streaks of the morning light that actually made it past the tiny window. Kai finally had allowed himself to sleep in the same bed with Kyungsoo a month more or less ago, including his habits of sleeping with only shorts. In fact Kyungsoo didn't mind that habit at all. It was truly a sight to see — and he could see it every morning. Despite the scars and dark blue blotches from the training that marked the alpha's skin, he still looked amazing. Kai had tan skin from all the time he spend outside and thanks to that also a sculpted body. He had very distinctive muscles, but was still agile.

Kyungsoo found himself often watching how the muscles would move under his touch or with a certain movement from the shifter. And when he caught himself staring at Kai, he would always blush like the innocent boy he is.

"Mhh..." Kai's eyes remained closed while he was deep in thought. "Actually, I don't know. I've never heard about it. But it sounds impossible to me, truthfully."

"Mhh..." Kyungsoo imitated and drew invisible patterns on the skin of his mate's stomach. He felt like every time he saw Kai's stomach, his abs were more defined than before. "Is there a way to research on that?"

Kai yawned and took Kyungsoo's hand in his to interlace their fingers. "Don't know. I can check for some writings later." Kyungsoo leaned down to press a chaste kiss on Kai's lips. "That would be nice."

In the end Kai didn't find anything that fit what he wanted to find and returned to his cabin empty handed.

"I know, I already asked, but... can I see your wolf?" Kyungsoo looked up at his mate with the biggest puppy eyes he could muster. "Please?"

"I doubt you would like to see it."

“No, I really want to!”

“You will be scared.”

“Let this be my problem.”

“Kyungsoo...”

“Please, *alpha*?”

Kai dragged his palms over his face and Kyungsoo grinned in victory. He had found out that his mate had a weak spot if he called him by his status, it aroused him even. Knowing that made a lot of things easier for Kyungsoo. “Kyungsoo, I told you so many times, don’t call me that.” Kai whined, his voice muffled through his palms. ‘Why not?’ Kyungsoo grinned devilishly and climbed onto Kai’s lap. “*Alpha*?”

“I swear you will be the death of me one day...” Kai wheezed and shoved Kyungsoo from his lap to stand up. Kyungsoo snuggled into the warm spot Kai had left behind on the chair and stared anticipating at his mate. “Close your eyes.”

Kyungsoo instantly let his eyelids fall and listened to the sounds of clothes rustling and hitting the ground, one by one. Doing his best to not imagine how Kai looked like now, stark naked in front of him, he pushed the thoughts away by imagining him as a wolf. “When should I open my eyes?” It has been silent for a minute or so and Kyungsoo wasn’t too sure about what to do. “...Kai? I’m opening my eyes now.”

Kyungsoo looked up and shrieked unmanly.

In front of him stood a very large creature with a darker shade of brown fur and golden glowing eyes. At least the expression in his eyes hadn’t changed, Kyungsoo noted relieved. It may seem a stupid thought, but to him those eyes were very valuable. They mirrored the gentle soul in front of him.

Kai didn’t stir and Kyungsoo slowly stood up and moved forward, step by step, eyes never leaving the alpha. He was truly fascinated. Kai’s presence almost screamed authority and he was built so massive. His paws could crash Kyungsoo’s head in a mere second.

When Kyungsoo stood directly in front of the alpha he went down on his knees and finally, *finally*, ran a hand through the dark fur. It was quite rough, but not that much to make it uncomfortable under his touch. “Wow. That is... amazing.”

The wolf snorted — at least Kyungsoo thought so — and continued to stand still while his human mate let his fingers run over every curve, every small detail on his head. Kyungsoo teasingly tickled one of the soft ears and it flicked once.

Let’s just say Kyungsoo didn’t get tired of that anytime soon, and Kai sighed in amusement.

“You told me I would be scared! But you look just like an oversized puppy!” Kyungsoo giggled and imitated the playful growl Kai had replied onto that. Kai sat down on his hind legs and lightly pushed Kyungsoo with his front paw. The force he used was almost none and still Kyungsoo tumbled over, still laughing, as he wiggled around like a turtle on its back. “Hey! That’s not fair okay?!”

The human threw himself at the wolf for revenge and Kai let himself plop down, just to make it seem like his mate actually has had success in throwing down a werewolf. Laughing Kyungsoo snuggled down onto Kai’s side and inhaled the usual scent of Kai. “Thanks for showing me.”

Suddenly he felt himself dip lower and the next second he was lying on a stark naked Kai who smirked up at him. “No problem, mate.” Kyungsoo chose to ignore the teasing undertone and his mate’s skin under his hands and chose to kiss him with full force instead.

By now he knew how to kiss Kai to leave him breathless, and in return Kai also knew how to build up that fire inside Kyungsoo that wouldn’t die down for the next few hours and leave him restless.

“Do you always remain naked when you shift back?” Kyungsoo asked when he was pleased with the way both of their lips were already swollen and slightly covered in spit. “Unfortunately, yes. We hide clothes in the Upperwoods for when we have to mix under humans.”

“That means...” Kyungsoo pondered for a moment and then looked offended. ‘How many people exactly have seen you naked?’ He stood up to let Kai gather his clothes. “Kyungsoo, nudity is not unusual

here.” It wasn’t a direct answer, but it was enough to make Kyungsoo jut out his lip in a pout because he wasn’t the only that had seen Kai nude by now.

Well, not exactly nude. He didn’t dare to look down further than the alpha’s navel, but that was enough for now. There was no need to rush, but still.

“Is there someone jealous?” Kai teased and finished putting on his shirt. “Don’t be. It’s really nothing special here. Also, many mated couples don’t show themselves freely because our kin tends to be very possessive, so there is no need to be worried.”

“Fine. But that doesn’t make me like it, just so you know.” Kyungsoo looked away while hoping that his alpha would take the hint and show him some affection. When Kai pulled him in for a back-hug he smiled happily. “Just promise me not to show yourself more than needed, *alpha*.”

“I’m all yours.”

They had overcome another wall that separated them, and Kai couldn’t be happier.

Even if Kyungsoo had given in to him because he had had no other choice — at least that’s what Kai believed — he was sure that they were getting closer to each other.

Kyungsoo meanwhile was sure he had made the right choice to trust Kai, because he slowly fell for the gentle persona that tended to overthink and hid behind red glowing eyes.

With baby steps they took turns to get to understand their differences and how to handle them.

Maybe I’ll forget all the things you said. END OF  
*THE SECOND CHAPTER.*

*a/n: Hey hoooo~*

*First of all, thanks so much for the positive feedback, especially the comments! It makes me really happy to see that some think of this story well!*

*Secondly; I wonder if this is what you all expected? Let me know! :)*

*—Smile*

## Chapter 4

---

03

Why do I stay if I know you're not mine?

*[M] This Chapter contains smut.*

If you leave a person in a confined place for so long, without enough exercise and stimulation, it's only natural for that person to have mood-swings. It depends on the individual how much it shows; some have complicated characters from the very start which leads to the swings being not as recognizable as when a calm person has them.

In Kyungsoo's case, he considers himself lucky. Kai always tries to feed him with information and continues on bringing him books.

Since the shifter now has to travel to the Upperwoods on more occasions than before, because of their hunting and research sessions, he tends to steal small things from stores to keep Kyungsoo entertained. Before, Kyungsoo wouldn't have appreciated such doings, but lately he can't find it in himself to mind. More and more the human's whole world consisted only of their room, *Kai's touches*, *Kai's voice* and *Kai's whole being*.

He knew exactly how Kai's eyes were tinted in a dark crimson red over day and flashed up highlighted when he was aroused or angered.

He knew how to touch the wolf in front of him to turn the usual proud alpha into a mere tail wagging pup.

He *knew* how to say Kai's name to get everything he wanted, whether it was in a deeper octave to spike him with pleasure or in a cutesy way that made his mate give up in any argument.

And with that his whole world seemed to regress into a not so far away horizon, filled with tons of different pictures of Kai.

For an outstanding person this might be exaggerated and unhealthy — and it probably was — but Kyungsoo didn't find any reason to care about that. He had found a person to call his, a place to call home, and he didn't want any more than that. To him, this was *perfect*.

While Kyungsoo was stretching his weakened muscles to start his training session — he had requested Kai to set him up a few exercises so he could work out a bit when the soldier was away — he watched Kai nibble on a slice of bread while reading some report. Since they had started to have more physical contact, Kyungsoo grew much more accustomed to the soldier's tender cuddles, and he couldn't help but think about doing the next step. He now knew enough about the shifters lifestyle to understand that, in their point of view, Kai's and Kyungsoo's mating process wasn't completed yet. The thought made him nervous but at the same time also excited. With Kai it was something else, he trusted him.

Not stopping moving, Kyungsoo spoke his thoughts. "When is the next full moon phase going to be?" His alpha blinked and then thought about it for a second, before answering. 'It should be soon. I think in about a fortnight?' The human hummed and bowed down, practically folding his body in half. He felt the red eyes stare at him but chose to ignore them. "Are you thinking about completing the mating process?"

"Yes... Do you... have any objections?" Kyungsoo answered honestly, at the same time struggling to get up again. 'No... "Kai answered," Not really. I'm actually very happy.' Kyungsoo threw him a smile which got returned and he resumed with another stance. "I thought that it wouldn't stand out in any way, when the air is supposedly full of pheromones." The shifter nodded and threw the long forgotten report onto his desk. "That's true. I'll see what I can do."

Letting go of his elbow, Kyungsoo arched an eyebrow. That sounded quite weird to say when they were talking about *mating*. "What do you mean?"

"Let yourself be surprised, 'Soo." And with that the conversation was finished. Kyungsoo was left being giddy and curious about what his alpha had in mind.

A few days later Kyungsoo had successfully forgotten about his alpha's promise after bugging the shifter without getting any result at all.

"What do you like the most about the human world?" Kyungsoo asked while drawing in his journal, seated between Kai's strong thighs

as they sat on the floor, with Kai leaning on the bed. ‘You said you’ve been there a few times.’ Kai nodded as well as he could, with his head resting on Kyungsoo’s shoulder. “I didn’t see a lot. But from what I know, I’d definitely say the thing you call electricity.” His voice came out a bit squished because the alpha refused to move more than needed. Kyungsoo chuckled and started re-drawing a few outlines of the flower thicker. “You have electricity too?” Kai nestled deeper into Kyungsoo’s neck. “Only limited.”

“I like what you told me about the Underwoods more.” Kyungsoo admitted and rested his book in one hand to stroke his mate’s hair, the soft strands feeling nice under his touch. The alpha almost purred with the attention he got. ‘I like that here it is okay to love a man if you are one yourself, same to women.’ Kai’s noises of pleasure got louder and calmed the human in a way he couldn’t explain. This felt like home to him. “No one can choose who is destined for him. Only fate can show you; bring you to the one you belong to. Whether it is a man or a woman, there is a reason why you are bound to one another with fate’s red strings.” Kai grumbled, almost not hearable.

Kyungsoo hummed in agreement and resumed his drawing, ignoring the cute whining noise his alpha made in return. Maybe he and Kai were fated from the beginning. They got along really fast and they could understand each other so well without words. Basking in the comfort of his mate, Kyungsoo finished his picture during the next hour or so. Thinking for a moment, Kyungsoo turned it a bit to write something in the bottom corner of the page.

“Aren’t you getting hungry?” Kai had dozed off over the last hour, which led Kyungsoo to jolt a bit. He didn’t expect Kai to suddenly wake up from nothing and ask him about food. ‘No.’ He felt too good right now to change anything, so his stomach had to be patient. “Not really—” But his body had other priorities, since he hadn’t eaten anything the last few hours, and before he could finish talking, his stomach grumbled softly.

Trying to look as innocent as he could, Kyungsoo turned his head to smile crookedly at his alpha. “Kyungsoo...” Kai sighed, misinterpreting his mate’s denial for Kyungsoo wanting to save food. Kyungsoo shifted a bit more and poked Kai lightly a few times while sharing his reasons embarrassed. “No, no... Whatever you think, it’s not that. I just didn’t want you to stand up and leave this little... bubble of ours... you know?”



That made the shifter smile a bit and silently cradle Kyungsoo in his arms again. "Then let's eat later." Kyungsoo nodded and molded himself against his alpha.

They fell asleep like that not long after.

It had finally been a fortnight and for Kyungsoo that meant no more waiting. Even he could feel the air heavy with pheromones and so much more Kyungsoo couldn't detect with his weaker human nose. That didn't mean that Kai couldn't smell it, because the alpha had been on the very edge the last two days, with the smell building up until it was unbearable. That, causing Kai to be a lot more possessive and rough, resulted in Kyungsoo looking even more forward to the night.

The human was confused when Kai came over to him, body obviously tense, to hand him a coat. "Dress up and make sure you won't freeze outside." Kyungsoo was sure he was looking either really stupid or inappropriate right now, with his mouth opening and closing like a fish, while he searched his brain for the words he wanted. "... Outside? You mean as... You allow me to get me out of the room?"

The shifter nodded and smiled, though a bit forced. "Yeah. I thought it would be a nice idea... I was planning on showing you my favorite place, what do you think?"

With Kyungsoo's mouth suddenly being dry, the human only nodded repeatedly while jumping around Kai and making joyous sounds. The shifter only laughed at that and threw Kyungsoo some clothes on the head, getting him to finally dress up so they could go.

When they were finally standing in front of the door, Kyungsoo grasped for his alpha's hand, as Kai was standing behind him to entrust him with the privilege to open the door. The door squeaked a bit in its angles and Kyungsoo squinted his eyes as Kai led him out of the room.

Cold air seemingly slapped Kyungsoo in the face as he took the first step out of the cabin. While Kai took a step back to close the door, Kyungsoo tried to open his eyes a few times, only to be forced to close them again seconds later when they teared up. His eyes had gotten so very sensitive and used to the dim light from their room, that now the overload of bright colors and change in air struck a nerve. Disappointed, Kyungsoo felt an incoming headache, but nonetheless

urged his eyes open again. This continued for a minute or two with Kai standing patiently beside him, alert but silently waiting, eyes switching directions every few seconds to observe their surroundings.

In the end Kyungsoo managed to look around curiously, his eyes tearing a bit but that subsided after a few minutes, much to his relief. They started walking with Kai leading and Kyungsoo staring fascinated at everything that was on their way. The cabins here were set up in some kind of formation Kyungsoo didn't understand, they were small and looked like they had seen better years, their paint already peeling off. But that was probably just enough for a soldier that was more outside than inside.

After about half an hour of slow walking, the cabins decreased until they completely vanished and with them also Kyungsoo's energy. His body had adapted to getting second to none exercise which lead to Kyungsoo's breathing getting a bit more strained by the second. Kai seemed to notice it but he continued their way nonetheless.

"Before you came into my life" Kai suddenly started and slowed his pace to let his tired mate catch up. 'I would always come here in my free time and just take a walk.' He smiled, seemingly remembering something. "Sometimes — when the weather was warm enough — I'd also sleep here instead of in the cabin. There were times Chanyeol accompanied me, but not that often. He may not look like it, but he is that kind of a person that needs their four walls around them to be able to sleep."

Neither of them noticed when they had stopped walking. Kyungsoo stared up at Kai, admiring the shifter's features, this time with actual light shining on him. He felt like, now that he was able to see Kai like that, he could finally completely grasp that Kai was indeed *real*. But at the same time he looked like straight from a book, so ethereal and perfect in Kyungsoo's eyes.

When Kai noticed his staring, Kyungsoo quickly averted his eyes and sucked in a deep breath out of surprise. They were in a simple forest, but what struck him was the sight added with the white, white snow. It was the first time that Kyungsoo was in a forest at winter. And it was a completely different feeling from the time he had been lost in the forest when he was small and the world still okay. "You like it? It's nothing special, but somehow the forest here always fascinates me."

Kyungsoo nodded lightly and stepped forward, inspected the snow glimmering under the fading sunlight. “It has some kind of... magical atmosphere.” The human agreed and smiled. Suddenly Kyungsoo started to spin around, once, twice, and many more times, all the while laughing like he was the happiest person on earth.

When Kyungsoo was about to stumble and fall, Kai got him at his elbow and amusedly observed how his mate’s eyes couldn’t focus for a while. He seemed so happy — almost glowing. “Th-Thanks so— so much, Kai!” Kyungsoo giggled while taking a hold of Kai’s coat in an attempt to stop the swirling feeling in his head.

Suddenly Kyungsoo pushed Kai away and in the speed of light cupped some snow to throw it at his mate, the aching feeling in his body and the swirling in his head long forgotten. The alpha was taken aback and growled in a playful, but still dominating manner. Though it didn’t stop his mate, as he continued to laugh like a little kid while trying to coat Kai in cold, wet snow. When Kai averted the snowballs with amazing precision, Kyungsoo slowly stumbled backwards until he gave up and ran away with a high pitched giggling. Kai, of course, followed him.

Kyungsoo was clearly out of energy but he enjoyed himself so much that he urged his body further, and Kai took his time in catching his beloved. When he finally deemed it enough, he took a hold of his mate’s wrist and spun him around until their bodies collided. Only then they realized that the sun was almost completely gone and replaced by a full moon. The air seemed to start glittering and somehow everything seemed tinted in a gentle but cold blue color.

But all that didn’t seem important when the human caught the look Kai gave him. The look of pure affection and insatiable *hunger*. Kai slowly pulled his mate up and secured him with his arms around Kyungsoo’s waist, kissing him tenderly. All of a sudden the whole atmosphere had changed and they both felt like it just *wasn’t enough*, more body contact needed to tame the heat that made its way through their bodies.

Kyungsoo slowly let himself be guided down onto the snow and let red eyes greedily take in the sight. How he laid there, with both his hands on each side of his head, panting heavily with swollen, red lips. Black hair strands, starting to get wet because of the snow, sticking in a sensual way onto pale — *oh so pale* — skin.

Kai's upper body then followed the one of his mate down; all the while he couldn't keep his hands by himself, and allowed them to reach for what was now fully *his*. "...*Kai*"

He could feel the snow seep through his clothes; spreading coldness onto his skin.

He could feel the long, rough fingers that mapped out his body.

He could *feel* Kai's heartbeat and the way his heavy breath would caress Kyungsoo's face.

Kyungsoo arched his back off the snowy ground and into the body above him, tried to hold in his moans, as Kai traced the human's pulse with his tongue. It left a barely noticeable wet path that had Kyungsoo shudder. Pale hands made their way up into black hair, tugged on it to hint what he wanted. Kai complied and instantly Kyungsoo seized the opportunity to take those smirking lips with his own. Kyungsoo moaned when a hand travelled under his shirt, caused him to shiver, as freezing skin met heated one.

The snowflakes continued to fall in the background, gentle and silent. It all added to the kind of clear and surreal atmosphere that Kai had wanted Kyungsoo to experience.

They continued kissing for a while, the kiss shifting from loving and sensual, to something more, something wilder that asked for *even more*. And Kyungsoo had no time to feel self-conscious when so many sensations washed over him, left him breathless and feeling loved in every pore of his body.

Kai raised his upper body again and cupped Kyungsoo's cheek with his other hand, the tender touch moving from the cold cheek up and into his wet hair, where it stilled and shortly after, pulled him up lightly. Accompanying Kyungsoo's movement, Kai sat back and pulled his mate onto his crotch, securing him with his knees on Kyungsoo's back.

Kyungsoo looked down with hooded eyes that closed when Kai latched his mouth once again on his neck where the old claim mark resided and soon teeth joined. The human let his hands roam from the alpha's slim middle up to his broad back. When Kai bit him a bit harder, enough for it to sting, Kyungsoo gripped tightly onto the shifter's shoulders, unconsciously also tightening his thighs on Kai's

hips.

The human's whole body felt on fire, the wetness and cold from the snow long forgotten. "Kai, please..." He didn't know what he begged for, but Kai seemed to know. Instantly he felt a light patting on his thighs and stood up, a bit wobbly with desire. He didn't have to wait for long when Kai handed him his own jacket and started stripping. This time Kyungsoo didn't look away or restricted his sight. He knew he had every right to look at his alpha — and soon he would see it all in closer proximity.

When Kai was done shifting, Kyungsoo scurried over and heaved his smaller body up with his remaining strength and the alphas help. Not much later they tangled their way through the trees and Kyungsoo only now saw how far they had been walking the whole time.

By the time they arrived in front of the soldier's cabin, Kyungsoo's fingers had lost feeling almost completely and his head hurt from the harsh wind. Luckily he managed to open the door and let himself and his mate in, where Kai shifted back.

Waiting until the shifting process was completely done, Kai moved over to Kyungsoo who had started shedding his dripping clothes. Being already bare, the alpha helped Kyungsoo opening a few buttons while slotting their lips against each other. When Kyungsoo only had his underwear and an open button-up shirt left, Kai took it onto himself to lift Kyungsoo up by his hips and the human complied with locking his ankles behind Kai's back.

Both of them were already fully erect and aroused to no end, and Kyungsoo had to ignore the voice in his head whining at how the hell Kai was supposed to fit in him. His size was definitely a thing to be proud of and Kyungsoo now remembered why he hadn't wanted to see it all the while before. But Kai did a very good job with distracting his human.

On the way over to the bed they never once stopped making out. And truly, Kyungsoo had never felt such desire spreading and thumping through his veins in his entire life. It was overwhelming, like the whole love he had gathered up for Kai was about to spill from his heart. "... Kai, I want you..." Kyungsoo whispered into Kai's ear, when the other laid him onto the bed and was about to come closer again.

Complying, Kai gently tugged the button-up down Kyungsoo's pale shoulders, mindlessly throwing it off the bed to accompany the other clothes on the floor, followed by briefs.

Kai wasn't that familiar with stretching because usually the submissive would have self-lubricant, but now with Kyungsoo being a human, he didn't have that luxury. "Going to stretch you, 'kay?" Kai breathed out, clearly having a hard time to control himself. "Just relax. It'll get better in no time."

Kyungsoo nodded and let his head be propped up on a cushion before he watched Kai lathering a finger in saliva — he deemed it one of the hottest things he had ever seen — and then there was another hand that urged him to open his thighs for the alpha. Obedient he let it happen and soon after, there was a slow intrusion on his hole. He cried out softly and tried his best to relax. All the while Kai continued to whisper sweet nothings, lips brushing the human's ear. Soon he was stretched enough and Kai made Kyungsoo get even more aroused when he lapped one, twice, on the fingers that had been inside him a moment ago.

The breach was uncomfortable but eventually it became bearable thanks to the stretching. "God... Kyungsoo, you feel incredible..." Kai groaned and Kyungsoo felt a wave of satisfaction wash over him at those words. It took a few moments to adjust, but once Kai started slowly moving his hips to thrust into the human, Kyungsoo didn't want him to stop.

It aroused the alpha even more when Kyungsoo's hands glided down from his body onto his behind and tried to press him in even more. "Kai! Don't stop, please!"

"As you wish." Kai answered, reaching a hand behind to take one of Kyungsoo's, interlacing their fingers and positioning it over his mate's head, and leaned down a bit to continue whispering. "... I won't even stop when you *scream my name* on the top of your lungs."

Standing to his word, Kai started to pound into his mate. Pace fast and hard, and Kyungsoo found himself loving the feeling of the stinging skin that it brought with itself. While crying for the shifter to go *harder* and *faster*, Kyungsoo suddenly saw stars. His reaction must have given away since Kai muttered a "Found it." and resumed to thrust *even harder*, which made Kyungsoo particularly scream with pleasure. All earlier thoughts of being cautious forgotten.

At a certain part tears glided over Kyungsoo's face. He was so, so near his release. "...Kai-ah, I-I'm so-*oh* close..." The alpha's breathing was harsh, his eyes glowing even more than ever before, a highlighted crimson color that seemed to arouse Kyungsoo so much that he couldn't bring it over himself to look away, leaving his eyes halfway closed while his whole body rocked up with Kai's thrusts. "Me too, 'Soo..."

After a few more thrusts something changed and when Kyungsoo felt something stretch him more and more, his eyes widened. "Kai-*ah*, Kai what is th-at?" It stretched him to the point of hurting and he couldn't stop his body from cramping down. "Sssh... its okay baby... that's just my knot, bear with it, the pain will fade..."

Changing his stance a bit to proceed with shorter thrusts and more strength, Kai started to roll his hips more. The way his magical spot was hit on so often made Kyungsoo's eyes almost roll into his head from the pleasure it brought. It made him forget the swelling of the alpha's knot, and soon he came untouched onto his stomach.

Thick ropes covering his stomach, the human groaned when Kai scooped some of them onto his finger and urged Kyungsoo to suck at it. Obeying after a second, Kyungsoo moaned from the taste, which resulted in Kai coming because of the sight of his mate suckling at his index finger. Shooting long streaks of white into the human, Kai slumped over onto Kyungsoo, locked through the knot.

Kyungsoo giggled when Kai's hair tickled him on his chin and the alpha shifted to give him a loving smile, followed by a chaste kiss. "Are you alright?" Kyungsoo nodded and carded through Kai's disheveled hair. "I'm more than fine. And now you are officially mine." The human started to giggle again and Kai adored the sight of his mate. He was acting so adorable — as if they haven't had sex just now.

"You're looking really good like that, your hair so mussed up and sweaty. Guess I can't let you go, now that I know how you probably look like that after your workouts." Kyungsoo mused and Kai snorted lovingly. 'I don't know what to reply to that?' The alpha admitted, occupied with nipping on the sweaty, pale skin in front of him. He knew he'd never get tired of marking Kyungsoo in various places. "Just tell me you are mine..."

“I am — and will forever be — yours, Kyungsoo.”

Later, Kyungsoo woke up in an ungodly hour to Kai pressing a tender kiss on his forehead. “I’ll be on my way now, okay?” Knowing he couldn’t change anything about the situation, Kyungsoo nodded. ‘Be safe. Love you.’ Kai was caught off guard a moment by a statement, but then beamed down at his mate. “Love you too Kyungsoo.” He gave him another kiss that warmed Kyungsoo’s heart and then reluctantly made his way out of the cabin.

Kyungsoo sighed lightly, still half asleep, and buried his head again in the cushions. He inhaled Kai’s scent and rolled onto the side where still a bit of Kai’s warmth lingered.

“Please come back safe.”

Some days later, Kyungsoo woke up alone again, but this time he felt his mood rise as more as his mind lost its sleepy state. He felt like Kai would come home very soon, and that itself was enough for him to look forward to today. He stretched his arms a bit over his head with a grunt and rolled over onto his side, promptly deciding to continue to laze around for a bit longer.

Letting out a content sigh, he stilled until there was an unfamiliar movement in front of his eyelids. Alarmed, his big, round eyes snapped open and he noticed a stranger in the cabin. As soon as Kyungsoo made out the other person he sat up and pushed his body back until it hit the wall, his mind stumbling over thoughts of what to do.

“Umm... Hi?” The stranger said with an awkward smile, also clearly not knowing what to do in this situation. ‘I’m Chanyeol... I guess you already know my voice.’ Kyungsoo recalled the times he had to hide in the closet and nodded timidly. Chanyeol seemed to realize that Kyungsoo was scared and confused right now, because he tried to reassure the human with putting more distance between them. “It’s okay; I won’t do anything to you... I just wanted to see if my suspicions were right. It won’t look good for Kai if this gets known.”

Kyungsoo swallowed hard and moistened his lips. “You... you won’t harm us?” Chanyeol’s eyes widened and he quickly shook his head. Faintly the human noticed the elf-like features the shifter had. “Kai is like a brother to me. And it’s not like there is any harm with you being here. You probably never even left this room, right?”



Kyungsoo nodded again and willed his body to relax a bit before he would start hyperventilate. His body craved for Kai's comfort in such a situation, this was more stress than he ever had had over the past half year. "Listen, I won't hurt you, I promise! What is your name? How did you come down here?"

When Chanyeol attempted to come closer to him, Kyungsoo couldn't control his body anymore and he started sobbing and gasping for air, small chants of Kai's name leaving his trembling lips. Of course Chanyeol panicked and decided to step forward, when the door flung open and Kai shot through the room, tackling his taller friend to the ground while growling aggravated. It literally took all of Chanyeol's self-control to not attack his friend back; who looked like his feral side didn't let him catch up on what was going on, only thing in mind to protect his mate.

Kai's red irises shot from the struggling shifter under him to his mate and he quickly let go to sprint over to Kyungsoo and hide him behind his own body, not stopping to let out warning growls. Chanyeol gasped to fill his lungs with air once again and sat slowly, all the while holding up his hands in a manner to show that he was no harm. "Kai, calm down, I won't do anything! You know you can trust me! He had just started to cry and I wanted to see if he was okay, believe me."

The two alphas maintained eye contact for a few silent minutes until the feral expression on Kai's face started to disappear slowly. Turning around to Kyungsoo, the shifter touched his mate gently. "Are you okay 'Soo? Did he do anything?" When Kyungsoo shook his head and latched his body completely on Kai's, the alpha relaxed and threw Chanyeol an apologizing glance.

The other alpha smiled reassuringly and sat on Kai's armchair to put enough distance in between them. Better safe than sorry. Kyungsoo continued to hiccup a bit, but else he was fine now in his alphas arms. "Why are you here Yeol?" Kai finally asked and furrowed his brows. 'Why are you sneaking around when I was told you are not able to support our hunt?' Chanyeol looked around uneasily. "The higher-ups suspected that maybe a human managed to enter the Underwoods and was hiding somewhere. And since you are busy with the new forces, I got tasked to check. Seems they were right... but why? Why is he here? Are you sure he is no danger to us? Didn't you think about getting caught someday? Hell, Kai, they will kill you!"

Kai grimaced. "I knew we didn't have forever, but I guess I got reckless after all this time. And no, he is no danger. He is my mate, Chanyeol, for fuck's sake! I couldn't just kill him!" Chanyeol nodded in understanding and rubbed over his temples. "I know, I know... It's just, this situation is so absurd — not to offend to your mate in any way — and I am worried they will get you for this. Though it's not your fault you have a human mate."

"...Kyungsoo." The human in Kai's arms mumbled out of nowhere and Chanyeol looked up surprised. "My name is Kyungsoo... nice to finally meet you, Chanyeol." He made an almost-bow and then pressed his face into his alpha's shoulder again.

"Yes! I'm sure we will get along!" Chanyeol beamed in return and stood up to grant Kyungsoo a proper bow. "I promise you, I won't tell anyone. And if you need any help, tell me." Kai smiled at that and relaxed entirely.

Chanyeol sat down again, this time on the floor in front of the bed to let Kyungsoo see him, and cocked his head to the side. "So, how did you get down here?" Instead of the human, Kai answered. 'He was the one the runaway wolf chased half a year ago. The wolf was probably about to port but instead of him, Kyungsoo fell through it.' Chanyeol formed a silent 'o' with his lips and stared at the human. "Poor thing. What a way for fate to unite mates." Kai let out a tired chuckle. "You tell me. I wanted to tell you, but I guess I overthought it until I forgot my trust in you."

"I can understand that. Suddenly everyone could be your enemy, huh?" Chanyeol replied and rested his head on the bed, looking like a pup. "We should be glad it was me who found little Kyungsoo here. What do you plan on doing now?" The answer was obvious when Kai hit his head on the wall repeatedly what lead to Kyungsoo look up saddened. Chanyeol observed quietly how the human raised a hand to put it on the wall to cushion Kai's head, and how Kai then looked down sadly and kissed him on the forehead.

The two soldiers continued to discuss Kai's situation a while longer, sometimes getting interrupted when Kyungsoo decided to share something with them. They didn't get that much further, when Chanyeol saw that it was time to leave the mated pair alone to calm down. "I feel like I overstayed my time here. See you, Kyungsoo." The fellow soldier stood up to stretch his long limbs and looked sympathetically at Kai. The pair said their goodbye and Kyungsoo

followed Chanyeol with his eyes until the alpha was out of the door.

“Can we really trust him?” Kyungsoo asked, trying to reassure himself that nothing bad will happen the next day — that he and Kai would still be safe.

“I hope so...” Kai chose to trust his friend. And he hoped he didn’t make the wrong decision.

That night, while being snuggled in his mate’s strong arms, Kyungsoo laid awake and mindlessly stroked Kai’s bicep with his fingers. How could he get rendered so defenseless in a mere second? Chanyeol had been right, if it hadn’t been him that found Kyungsoo that day and Kai wouldn’t have rushed over, Kyungsoo would have been in a bad situation. He remembered how he wasn’t even able to breathe properly because of the fear.

Also there was Kai.

At that moment the alpha hadn’t been his lover, his mate — no, he’d been almost a stranger to Kyungsoo. He wasn’t scared — at least he didn’t think so — but more... surprised.

With that feral expression on his face and how he had moved, calculated and every so little movement to his advantage. That small glimpse Kyungsoo had been granted to catch of his alpha had shown him a very little piece of what the soldier was capable of.

Kyungsoo sighed again and turned a bit to blend out everything by pushing his face up Kai’s neck. The last thing he did before falling in a fitful sleep was praying to whoever watched over him up in the heavens may have mercy on them.

On the other side of the camp, a few rows of cabins further, Chanyeol sat in his bed and thought about the same. Even though he should just be content, keep the secret and not worry further about it, it managed to follow him through the time with his new mate. Looking beside him, he traced with his eyes the small and fragile contours of his beta, lying there and sleeping peacefully. Somehow, the beta and Kyungsoo were similar from their forms, he noticed faintly.

If he was in Kai’s situation, he would act the same way, the tall

soldier realized. He would do anything for his mate, and so would Kai. But how long could the two keep going?

“...Yeol?”

Chanyeol snapped out of his trance and a smile blossomed on his face at the scene before him, how his mate was rubbing his one eye tiredly with a tiny, balled fist. “Why aren’t you sleeping? Are you okay?” For a moment the alpha thought about telling his mate about his worries, but then he reconsidered and moved to spoon the beta. “I’m perfectly fine... just realized that I am so happy to have you.”

The beta chuckled but didn’t comment any more on that, confident that his mate will tell him when he’s ready. Soon the beta fell asleep again, but his alpha followed him into his dreams much, much later, in the early morning hours.

“You look like shit.” Kai stated with a small smile, though Chanyeol could easily make out the tense stature of his friend. ‘Well... thanks? So do you, actually.’ Chanyeol responded and they started to walk when Kai had caught up on him. “Couldn’t really get myself to sleep. Kyungsoo couldn’t either.” “Honestly, me too. I worried... about you two.” That had Kai avert his gaze to the other alpha.

“I know it must be hard for you to believe anyone, but when I said I wouldn’t tell anyone... I wasn’t lying about that.” Chanyeol cracked a halfhearted smile and ignored the stare, instead focused on the path in front of them. Kai continued to stare a bit through tired eyes, then gave up and mimicked his friend. “I have to go hunting soon again. Can you maybe keep an eye on Kyungsoo?”

Chanyeol nodded and remembered something. “Is it okay... if I tell my mate?” It probably struck a nerve from the way the other alpha’s jaw set, but Chanyeol needed to know. ‘You two didn’t meet yet, but he is my mate. I’m sure you know what I want to say with that.’ Kai took a huge inhale at that and then nodded very tensely. “Please be sure what you do, Yeol... I don’t mind what happens to me, but I don’t want any harm to befall my mate. I can take so much more torture than Kyungsoo.”

That had Chanyeol gulp hard and look at his moving feet. The image of his friend being centered by his own team and hunted down made him shudder and left goosebumps on his skin. “How about... you both prepare to leave and live in the human world? For you it

would be easy to adapt as a shifter and Kyungsoo wouldn't have to hide his life away in a small room." The taller male suggested cautiously.

"I know... and I admit a great part of Kyungsoo's situation is my fault. That he has to hide... I could've ported him back the very instant or have found another solution... but I am selfish. I am scared to leave everything I know and live a life being hunted with the risk of him just leaving me the first chance he gets. So I did the first thing in my mind and pushed this kind of life onto Kyungsoo... because this is easier for me." Suddenly, Kai looked so much older. His facial features dull, his usually energized movements now apathetical. "You have to say that to Kyungsoo. He deserves to know your thoughts and fears. I know how you are Kai. You probably are still a mystery to your mate, even after all this time."

With the advice left in the air, they both resumed walking in complete silence.

Kyungsoo allowed himself to relax after the fourth day when nothing happened.

Kai, too, internally waited for any clue that his friend betrayed them, always ready to grab his human and flee if necessary. Though the alpha did a good job at concealing his insecurities and instead giving his mate some sort of reassuring comfort.

Repressed to the very back of the alpha's mind still lingered his friends' advice about telling Kyungsoo his worries. But that contradicts everything Kai had been taught all his life. He had been taught how to seem indifferent, how to show superiority and have a confident demeanor. All that added to make it a difficult task to Kai though it sounded so *easy to just go and tell him*.

Every morning anew he urged himself to talk to his mate but welcomed every opportunity to delay the conversation. Kyungsoo happens to be still asleep; he was hungry, a bit moody or seemed exhausted — every little thing would discourage Kai before he even tried. Sooner than later that resulted in Kai being snappy outside their room, since he had always *just done what had to be done and that was the end to the story* — but not this time, and that nagged at his pride.

It was no surprise that one day Chanyeol and Kai got in a bad fight because the taller alpha had stressed Kai to finally get over with it and

settle the problem. It ended with them both bloodied and severely wounded, but after the incident Kai was calm and more collected than before. He had been able to let off some steam, what also had been the case for Chanyeol, as for the alpha had still been frustrated about if he should tell his mate or not.

After many excuses and a promise to do something again together in near future, their ways parted. Chanyeol had left with his mate — a relatively small beta that had instantly started to swear at Kai with a rather colorful choice of words until the alpha practically dragged him away — and Kai had set his mind on telling Kyungsoo this very evening.

The alpha had barely made it through the door when Kyungsoo had started fussing about him, and *what the hell he had done* to be this hurt. It made the shifter smile to see his mate act this way, and when Kyungsoo finally noticed his smile he seemed confused. “What? That’s nothing to be smiling about! What did you—”, but he couldn’t finish his sentence when Kai had pulled him in for a tight hug. “...Kai?”

When Kai finally freed his mate from the embrace, he finally talked up. “We need to talk.” He announced and took one of Kyungsoo’s hands in his to guide him to the bed. The human kept silent but didn’t let it take off himself to start to tend to the ripped skin on Kai’s shoulder. Kai surrendered after two attempts and took a moment to sort his thoughts. “I had a fight... with Chanyeol... because he was right with something I didn’t want to admit.”

He didn’t note Kyungsoo’s fascinated expression when he cleaned the wound without the alpha even flinching or twitching. “I don’t know how to say this... he encouraged me to talk to you...” Kyungsoo furrowed his eyebrows and looked up for a moment. “Talk to me? About what?”

“I... I am selfish. I kind of forced you to live like this, hiding here in a world that only brings you death. I could’ve let you go so many months ago or we could have fled together... but I am too... comfortable with you being here, shielded and not able to get away from me, that I didn’t take any initiative. I’m so sorry for that Kyungsoo...”

When the silence went on even after a minute the alpha looked up, unsure of what would await him. But Kyungsoo only smiled fondly at him and wringed out the rag with blood. Neither one made any

attempt to talk and Kyungsoo slowly proceeded with cleaning the other wounds too and bandaged them later.

“So...” Kyungsoo started and Kai’s head shot up in response. The human chuckled at that and straddled Kai’s lap, careful that he didn’t touch the scratches on the alphas’ thigh. ‘That was the reason you both fought?’ After getting a nod, Kyungsoo started to comb the others black hair. “Tell me, have I ever complained about being here with you?”

This time the alpha shook his head. “Exactly. Because I feel more at peace here with you, than I have ever felt somewhere else. Also, we are *mated*, Kai. Even when you’d tell me to leave, I would beg you to keep me. Because I love you, you understand that?” Kyungsoo never looked away while talking, always maintaining eye contact with the alpha. “My endearing alpha. But I am grateful that you thought so much about my situation.” With that he pecked the shifters forehead once and settled to wait for a reply.

“What good deed have I ever accomplished to deserve you, Do Kyungsoo?”

His human mate chuckled once again; the light sound finally relaxing the alpha’s body. “You saved me and gave me a home. That is more than enough.”

“So... do you want to?”

“Want what?”

“...live with me in the human world?”

The sound of a shocked gasp being inhaled startled the alpha out of his momentary relaxed state. “I mean... I would go, if you wanted me to... though I don’t know how long we can survive with my pack tracking us as soon as they find out and if that is what you want and —”

Like so many times, Kyungsoo stopped his rambling with a kiss. Though this time it felt... different. There were so many emotions washing over Kai in that moment that he could think of nothing more than kissing this beautiful human back with as much love as he was being given.

They only broke the kiss because of the burning in their lungs for air. Resting his forehead against his alphas, Kyungsoo greedily sucked in big gulps of air. He looked so breathtaking with his red, swollen lips and flushed cheeks and hair a bit mussed up from Kai's roaming hands.

"I would love to... I don't care if we are being hunted or where we are, because together we can manage it. I am sure."

"Okay." Was everything Kai managed to get out before, again, he pulled Kyungsoo into his chest and cradled him as tight as he could. Even when Kyungsoo was sure that he felt the fabric of his shirt getting wet, he didn't say anything. Instead, he lifted an arm and slung it over Kai's good shoulder and resumed with combing his alpha's hair. The other hand traced over the shifter's arm, gently and cautiously, to avoid the scratches and bites.

It was the first time after *years* that Kai dared to cry.

Protectively wrapped in his mate's embrace, he finally let his guard fall for this night only, and allowed Kyungsoo insight in his deepest fears and feelings.

That time he wasn't so sure anymore that he could take more upon himself than Kyungsoo. Physically, probably, but mentally the human was much stronger than he had anticipated.

And it felt good that — even if only for tonight — he didn't have to act to be confident, *to be okay*.

"*I love you so freaking much, 'Soo...*" Kai mumbled softly into his mate's hair, unknowingly causing a shudder to run down Kyungsoo's spine.

"*I love you too.*" Was everything Kyungsoo replied, barely a breathy whisper.

But it was enough.

It was more than enough, because Kai *knew* they would be okay.

Maybe I'll forget you some other time. *END OF THE  
THIRD CHAPTER.*



*a/n: Hello there~*

*Are you guys serious? 30 Upvotes and \*checks\* 303 Subscribers? That is so amazing! I'm honestly overwhelmed here. o(>ω<)o*

*Also, congrats for reading my first attempt at smut, bye. xD I wanted to edit it some more but I only got to proofread half the chapter (long chaps are a pain to proofread, srsly) because I took longer than expected and now I gotta go and meet a friend.*

*Agaaaain, thanks so much every single one of you! I appreciate the comments and upvotes a lot, thanks! <3*

*—Smile*

*P.S.: I deleted the extra chapter with the Underwood edit, so I'll just link the video [HERE](#). :)*

## Chapter 5

---

04

Lies on your lips, but there's love in your eyes.

*[M] This Chapter contains mentioned character death.*

The morning following after the incident, Kai was back to his old self.

He and Kyungsoo spent their early morning hours with cuddling and showered each other with selfless affection. "Where would you like to go? I've only been at the nearest city aside from the Upperwoods and our territory." Kai randomly admitted while running his fingers over Kyungsoo's features. From the red swollen and glistening lips up to his thick eyebrows and back down to his soft jawline; the soldier found himself adoring everything that was Kyungsoo.

The object of his affection had his eyes closed and Kai briefly wondered what may be going through his beautiful mind. Kyungsoo hummed and a lazy smile bloomed on his lips, his small hands never stopping with rubbing small circles onto his alpha's bare waist. "Dunno... I don't mind where, as long as you are with me." His deep voice murmured, barely audible, but Kai's keen ears caught it.

"C'mon... have you never wanted to travel somewhere before?" The alpha inquired again which caused Kyungsoo to let out an amused sigh. Before answering, the human shifted a bit in his makeshift cage consisting of his mate's arms. "Maybe somewhere near the sea would be nice..." He finally said with a soft voice. "My parents weren't fond of anything that included water, so it was out of question. And when I was old enough to travel by myself, I couldn't, because I had to fend for myself with them suddenly disappearing."

Big orbs shyly peeked up at the shifter, as if silently asking for permission. And who was Kai to deny his lover's wish. "The sea it is. But we won't be able to stay at one place for too long, my love, so you may want to make a list of places you want to see while you still have the time." Kyungsoo's big eyes vanished from the soldier's sight when the smaller hid his blushing face in Kai's chest. "That's fine with

me..." The smaller whispered and smiled secretly at his pet name.

But he couldn't hide for long when Kai decided that he wanted to see his lover's face again, and turned them until he was hovering over Kyungsoo, the smaller man's arms pinned down on both sides and slightly above his head. "Don't hide your face" Kai ordered Kyungsoo halfheartedly. "I want to see everything of you." His words had many different ways to interpret them, but Kyungsoo knew what the alpha had wanted to say.

And his heart melted at the thought.

The human did the first move and lightly raised his head to encourage a kiss. Kai gave in rather quickly and followed Kyungsoo's head down when his neck started to hurt from the unaccustomed strain. The kiss deepened and got passionate quickly. Suddenly Kai lifted his upper body a few inches — just enough to part their lips and let their breaths mingle together — and let out a annoyed growl.

Kyungsoo didn't get the chance to ask what that was about, when a certain someone started banging on the door. "Kai! Up, up! Rise and shine! You two can be lovey-dovey later!"

A too cheerful voice bugged them through the wood. It took a moment for Kyungsoo to realize and then he started giggling at Kai's grimace.

The shifter averted his eyes from his mate and grumbled all the time while he quickly slipped in his clothes. Instead of being grateful to his friend for interrupting them before they'd go too far, he only acted like a little, spoiled pup and whined.

"Later." Kai grumbled and gave his mate a quick kiss on his lips before he shouted at Chanyeol to *shut the fuck up* and closed the door after himself. Kyungsoo had watched the whole scenario with an amused smile on his face.

The smile didn't leave his face, even when he decided to get some more sleep and cuddled back in the duvet.

Outside, the loud duo got various strange looks because yesterday they had been fighting like mad and now Chanyeol had an arm draped over Kai's shoulder and practically chewed his friends ear off with

talking about everything and nothing in general.

Discreetly Kai shifted under his friend's arm to avoid contact on the scratches that resided there. It was indescribable reassuring to know that the fight didn't stand in between their friendship and didn't ruin it.

"So... I suppose you both talked it out? He didn't react as you thought he would, didn't he? Am I right or am I right?" Chanyeol flashed him a big, confident smile, showing off his sharp canines more than was necessary. When Kai kept silent and looked indifferent despite the teasing question, Chanyeol was about to tackle his friend for a few recompensing words, when they got another companion. "You guys got over your lovers-quarrel?"

As if it was the most normal thing to do, Sehun took his place on Kai's other side and matched his strides to the other's. "Since when exactly do you hang out with us?" The tallest was confused. It wasn't long ago that Sehun had made it more than clear that his loud attitude was annoying him. The blonde clicked with his tongue and threw him an amused glance. "I don't hang out with you, but I do with Kai. I don't understand how he can bear with you though."

Before his companions could start any kind of drama, Kai questioned something that was bugging him since quite a while. "Sehun, can I ask you something?" The other had some kind of medical knowledge, Kai had been told, and that was just what he needed right now. "Sure. Shoot." Sehun's attention was completely on Kai now and Chanyeol pouted since they obviously ignored him.

"I was wondering..." The alpha furrowed his brows as he concentrated to find the right words. 'Does it have some side effects if a person isn't exposed to sunlight for a long time?' That got Sehun's interest and the blonde alpha seemed to think about it carefully. "Depends on how long. What timespan are we talking about?" He answered instead.

"About... half a year? A year?" Kai responded, a bit fidgety due to the answer he might get in return. Chanyeol threw him a glance which showed that he knew what Kai was talking about. Sehun caught the movement, but chose to ignore it in favor of answering Kai's question.

"I doubt someone could avoid the sun for *that* long, but to answer

your question, it's definitely not recommended. There are some vitamins we get through the sunlight and if they decrease to a minimum it causes symptoms like myocardial insufficiency, leading to congestive failure.\*"

The blonde looked at his companions and sighed at the view. Chanyeol looked utterly confused and Kai had gotten uncharacteristically pale. "Understandably: a weak heart. It's more likely for that person to get an apoplexy, a heart attack or cancer. Apart from that, I don't think it's something that causes a person to die, it just quickens the process. I'm talking about the body of a human right now, as I assume it's one we are talking about."

Kai was about to throw Sehun against the nearest surface and ask him how he knew of Kyungsoo, but he controlled his breath instead and opted for looking curiously at Sehun. But the other didn't look at him and seemed indifferent as always.

It left Kai wondering if he knew.

Chanyeol sensed his friend's distress and resumed talking to him, as if nothing happened and he didn't get interrupted before.

Sehun kept silent the rest of their way.

After the conversation, Kai was even keener regarding speeding up his and Kyungsoo's getaway.

"How was your day?" Kyungsoo asked with his usual warm smile and chewed on some bread crust. "It was boring, to be honest. I only..." That was when Kai's brain shut off and he resumed reading without listening to his friends babbling. Though Kyungsoo was happy to see his friend again, after all he didn't get to see anyone besides Kai before.

Chanyeol had decided to eat over at their room, for whatever reason. That reminded him that he wanted to ask the taller regarding that matter. "Why are you even here, Yeol? Did your mate kick you out?" The last sentence was more of a joke than to offend his friend.

The taller instantly spluttered over his soup and started grumbling irritated. "Chanyeol?" The human in their group was more concerned about Chanyeol's heart-matters than his own mate, who just sat in his

armchair and looked unimpressed.

“So he did, huh?” Kai pointed out and Chanyeol began to snarl at him. It was nothing serious, but to Kyungsoo it looked like they were about to fight, and he wasn’t going to let that happen. ‘Chanyeol?’ He asked again and this time the other alpha looked at him and stopped snarling, his lips forming a pout instead. “He didn’t kick me out... He’s with his parents today... Ah, by the way, I told him about you. Though he needs some time to digest the news, I’m positive he will like you!”

Kyungsoo smiled unsure and gestured for Chanyeol to resume eating. “Really, ’Soo, you are a lot kinder than that sad excuse of an alpha over there.” The taller retorted while almost going face first into the soup again. The human smiled politely and slowly put his bread back on the plate again, discreetly letting Chanyeol alone to not be tempted to scold the alpha for eating this messily.

He silently made his way over to his mate. Kai was sitting cross-legged with both elbows resting on his knees as he held the book with one hand, the other tracing on his own lips absentmindedly. Kyungsoo tapped onto one elbow to indicate his mate to lift his arm.

When Kai did, without disregarding the text in front of him, Kyungsoo glided through the space and sat on Kai’s lap sideways. Letting his legs dangle over the armrest, he laid his head onto his mates’ shoulder and rubbed his cheek affectionately on the soft fabric of Kai’s shirt.

Unbeknownst to them, Chanyeol had started to talk about something excitedly while munching on his leftover bread. The other hadn’t even noticed Kyungsoo’s absence.

Kai shifted a bit, the hand that had been at his lips was now caressing his mate’s scalp, and tilted his head to lean it on Kyungsoo’s forehead. The smaller felt himself relaxing even more, and gently pecked Kai’s throat repeatedly.

“Forget what I said, you’re both indescribable.” Chanyeol growled, suddenly having popped up in front of them. Kai was startled a bit when Kyungsoo jolted in his arms and, out of reflex, hit his friend on the head with his book. At that Chanyeol started whining and Kyungsoo couldn’t help but giggle. “Sorry friend, but you should know by now not to startle me when I am doing something.” Kai apologized

with a shrug and a smirk covering his features.

“Okay, okay, what should he do to make it up to you?” Two pairs of eyes looked at Kyungsoo in return, one almost offended and the other hopeful. ‘He will do anything?’ Chanyeol inquired with big eyes. Kyungsoo ignored his lover’s offended face and nodded. “Oh god, he is no kid, Kyungsoo. I’ve done worse to him.” Kai murmured but on Chanyeol’s face bloomed a smile that told him he couldn’t back out of this.

“Read something! I’ll sleep here tonight and usually my mate tells me something until I fall asleep.” The tallest easily decided, grabbed a blanket and two cushions and nestled around until he seemed to be a big cocoon.

Kai’s eye twitched irritated and Kyungsoo hurriedly rushed off to find a decent book to read. Setting for his own journal, he practically flew back to his mate and into his old position.

The only sounds in the room were the ones the pages did when Kyungsoo flicked through them. When he finally found what he had searched for, he handed it to his alpha and smiled up at him with a soft gleam in his eyes. “As if I were dealing with kids, seriously...” Kai cleared his throat, giving in to the situation, and started reading.

Kyungsoo’s writing was neat and easy to read, also had a good flow to it. He had a good way with words and halfway during the second page, Kai realized something.

This was *their* story.

Kyungsoo had written everything in form of a story.

That moment, he stopped caring that Chanyeol might hear all that. He only wanted to read and see how things seemed out of his mate’s perspective.

Sometime during the evening, Chanyeol had fallen asleep, nestled safely in his cocoon of textile. Kyungsoo was also vaguely slumbering on Kai’s chest. But his alpha was still deeply focused on the journal in his hand, only reading silently for himself now.

He only stopped reading early in the morning, eyes already burning

with exhaustion and his head hurting from reading this long with only dim light to guide him. Too tired and comfortable to move anywhere, he settled for sleeping like this.

With Kyungsoo in his arms and a warm, beautiful feeling in his chest.

Kai was barely awake when Chanyeol bid his goodbye and reminded him to settle into his bed if he wanted to avoid getting sore later. So when the door closed behind his friend, he still sat there, with sleepy eyes and a clouded mind, for what seemed an hour until he managed to blink and dragged his sleeping lover with him to their awaiting bed.

Today was his rare free day and he wasn't going to wake up voluntary before midday at least. Kyungsoo also didn't seem to mind and continued to cuddle against the shifter when they were finally surrounded by the slowly warming duvets. It didn't take long for them to drift back into dreamland.

Around midday Kai let himself be pulled out of the bed by his lover who wanted to dance a bit with him. It came out of nowhere, but that was a normal thing for Kyungsoo to be random. "Soo... I can't dance... can't we just go to bed again and cuddle?" The alpha whined in a whisper voice, his throat a bit scratchy from not swallowing while sleeping. Kyungsoo though was having none of that and ushered the alpha out of the warmth and into the slightly chilling temperature of the room. "C'mon Kai, I can't dance either but there's no harm in having a bit of fun, right?" Kyungsoo countered and laughed at his alpha's dazed expression.

Though that look quickly changed when the alpha seemed to sense something.

Suddenly the shifter's stance was alert and observant; his eyes focused on the door as if something — or rather someone — would come through any second soon.

Slowly, the shifter's hand grabbed for Kyungsoo and tugged him behind his body, shielding him from whatever was out there. An almost inaudible growl was heard and Kai crouched slightly, ready to pounce.

His mate's playful mood disappeared within seconds and he didn't



know what to expect as for he couldn't feel what Kai felt with his enhanced senses. But even without them, Kyungsoo felt fidgety all of a sudden, anxious even.

It could have been Kai's behavior that caused the feeling, but he didn't like the situation at all. He wanted to ask his alpha what was going on, but Sehun stormed through the door before he could do so.

Not knowing the shifter, Kyungsoo hid even more behind Kai and suppressed a whimper. Kai's growling had gotten louder but Sehun paid it no mind, instead he seemed breathless and restless. "You have to go, they found out about you and your mate! Hurry, Kai!" The blonde shifter urged Kai and locked the door behind his back. Momentary Kai stopped growling and strode over to Sehun. "What do you mean? How do you know about Kyungsoo?"

Sehun growled aggravated and pushed Kai back. Kyungsoo observed them with wide eyes, his heart beating frantically as he processed the situation. Quickly he rushed for the closet and pulled a backpack out of it, instantly starting to stuff some clothes inside. Kai threw Kyungsoo a glance and then back at Sehun, contemplating if he should follow the other's advice.

A second later he helped Kyungsoo with packing and Sehun kept guard at the door.

"You guys can't portal from here; they blocked the sphere for the time being. We have to get to the main portal somehow; from there you will be able to escape." Sehun hurriedly explained and Kai nodded along. "Yeah, I know a roundabout way to get there. But could you explain what *the fuck* is going on?"

Sehun drew another sharp breath and opened the door to get an overall view. "We still have some time, hurry. And about that, Baekhyun indirectly told them."

"Who the heck is Baekhyun? Wait, isn't he from the inner guard?" Kai grumbled; his voice strained. Kyungsoo meanwhile stuffed his journal into the bag and murmured to Kai that they had everything for now.

"Yes... and he is Chanyeol's mate." Sehun only whispered the last part, but Kai caught it nonetheless. Snarling, he took the bag from his mate and then Kyungsoo's hand to tug him along. Kyungsoo's wrist

hurt from the harsh treatment, but he didn't dare to make a sound, after all there was worse to come if they didn't make it in time.

Sehun realized they were done and opened the door to step outside and check the situation. Then he signed for the pair to come out and from then on Kai took the lead and directed them through the area. Kyungsoo hissed at the sudden brightness in front of his eyes, caused by the snow and sunlight that got reflected, his eyes getting irritated in a matter of seconds. The cold seemed to cut into his skin but he gave his best to ignore it in favor of escaping.

"We are almost there." Kai informed his companions and continued to scan the area with highly alert senses. Kyungsoo had a hard time keeping up, his body already tired because of his bad endurance. It felt like all his muscles were stiff and heavy as stone and he silently cursed with every step he took.

Abruptly his mate stopped and stood his ground, when the next moment a panting Chanyeol came into view. Kyungsoo suspected that the alpha had shifted to reach them in time, his body completely bare besides simple pants. Kyungsoo subtly averted his gaze to the ground and instead focused on calming his breathing.

"Kai!" Chanyeol took a big gulp and tried to catch his breath, meanwhile dragging his feet further to his friend. Sehun as well as Kyungsoo were surprised when Kai didn't show any sign of anger or hatred for the other, but stood there and waited. Chanyeol seemed to know what for, as he took big inhales of air and tried to explain. "Baekhyun was at his parent's last night, remember? He said he didn't know how to deal with the situation and talked with his mother about it... he trusted her but she immediately grounded him and went to tell the higher-ups. Oh god, Kai, I'm so, so sorry! Please forgive me; I should've been more careful!"

Chanyeol almost sobbed and Kai abruptly pulled him in for a brotherly hug. "You should have been, yes, but now it's already happened now and we need to get away." Kai's voice was deeper than usual and slightly wavering, but he remained strong. As soon as they pulled away, he grabbed his friend by his shoulders and looked him straight in the eyes. "Why are you even here?"

"They send me to stop you... they threatened to send Baekhyun if I didn't go... He would've done that... And he would have never had a chance against you..." Chanyeol admitted. Kai nodded. "Okay. Then

let's fight.”

“What? Are you crazy? Why—”, Chanyeol started and Kyungsoo tugged at Kai’s sleeve in panic, but the alpha didn’t budge. “You know how this works! You will get punished for keeping my secret; you can only survive if you say you tried to stop me from leaving.”

Sehun nodded and looked around. “He is right, Chanyeol. And you could save us some time when you head back.” Chanyeol looked torn but gave in, a pained expression on his face.

“Sehun, take Kyungsoo and bring him to the portal. I will meet you there. Please don’t make me regret that I trust you.” Kai said without looking at either his mate or Sehun.

Kyungsoo only made hiccupping noises as he started crying while Sehun dragged him away as gentle as he could. It took every ounce of self-control for Kai to not turn around and embrace his mate, to tell him everything would be okay.

Soon, Chanyeol and Kai were alone, standing in front of each other, both clearly pained by the situation. When Chanyeol showed no signs to move anytime soon, Kai took it upon himself and morphed into his wolf form, immediately snarling and growling afterwards to make Chanyeol do so too.

But even when Chanyeol shifted, he restrained himself from attacking and again, Kai took the first step and leaped at Chanyeol. Kai tried it all, even bringing up Baekhyun through their bond to get Chanyeol to seriously attack him. When he succeeded, they were both biting and clawing at each other.

Murderous growls and pained grunts echoing through the air and crimson, bloody splotches covered the snow on the ground as they leaped at one another, again and again.

The fight didn’t go long, with Chanyeol and Kai being equally strong, but it was intensive and Kai did his best to fire Chanyeol up. Though Kai didn’t come for a fight, he was determined to fight till the end.

It might not be a real battle between them both but he wouldn’t go easy, for the sake of his friend’s life that was on the line.

He didn't know how long they had been going on, but at some part they stood in front of each other, two huge furred creatures covered in the blood of each other, wet fur sticking on their limbs and panting.

They stood there for seconds, minutes, they didn't know, but Chanyeol reached his point and his front paws gave in. He fell forward and then the rest of his body slumped to the side.

It wasn't about the exhaustion or the wounds, he has had experienced worse.

It was about the fact that his own *mate* had betrayed his trust and therefore ruined the life of his best friend, the person he treasured the most after his mate. It was about having to fight with exactly *this best friend* to save his *own* life.

The other had always saved him from his cruel family, had encouraged him to join their forces. He'd always put up with his loud self, even when others had turned their backs on him. Kai had never lost faith in Chanyeol, had never mistrusted him. They were like brothers.

Chanyeol's eyes flicked up when he detected some movement from Kai. The other alpha stumbled a bit, but then bowed deep in front of his friend.

It was a meaningful gesture, full of respect and an unspoken promise.

*Goodbye, my friend.*

Chanyeol shifted, pushed his bare body up with his arms to look at his friend. Cursing his pride as an alpha, he finally let tears run down his cheeks. And he knew, Kai was mentally crying with him. He could *feel* it through their bond.

*Don't feel guilty. Forgive your mate. I'll pray that it will be you who will take my life.*

His whole body shuddered under the pain Chanyeol felt.

He yapped for air, almost frantically clawed at the skin where his heart thundered underneath. The pain of his wounds wasn't even

apparent at his mind right now, only the pain of how *unfair* all of this was. Kai, not even Kyungsoo, had ever done anything to deserve this, but here they were.

*Because of him.*

He swallowed hard once again and opened his mouth, forced his voice to come out. "I can't give you eternity with your mate... or grant you two the life you deserve..." He suppressed a pained whimper and averted his gaze. "But I can give you a few years if you are good in hiding and escaping. I wish you the best, my friend, I am sorry that this is all I can do for you."

When he looked back up, the dark wolf was already out of sight, but Chanyeol was sure he had heard him.

When Kai finally showed up at the portal, Kyungsoo instantly pushed his way out of Sehun's grip and rushed over to his mate. Fussing over the each and every blood drop he saw on the dark fur. Kai hadn't shifted back in his human form, as for that would drain too much of his remaining energy, instead he poked Kyungsoo at his kneecap to urge the human up his back.

When Kyungsoo understood, he resisted a bit out of anxiety to hurt the wolf, but reminded himself of the situation they were in and climbed up the huge creature. When the human was settled, Kai looked over to Sehun.

The other stayed silent and watched them with unreadable eyes. There was so much about this man Kai didn't know and didn't understand, but he did know that he was in fact grateful.

After gifting the other soldier another deep bow, Kai then watched as the blonde wordlessly disappeared from sight and into the shelter of the woods.

Kyungsoo, who had been silent during the last minutes, tugged a bit at the fur on Kai's neck and leaned down. "Let's go."

With that, Kai sprinted the few meters and then jumped through the white glowing surface of the portal. Kyungsoo almost shrieked in pain when his eyes were attacked once again with aggressive sunlight. He knew about the time-zones. With the nearing evening in the

Underwoods, the sun was almost on its highest point in the Upperwoods.

To shield his eyes, Kyungsoo leaned down and burrowed his face into the creature's fur, as Kai leaped forward with great effort and speed.

Kyungsoo's grip on the fur was so hard that his skin went numb and his arms and legs burned from the exertion.

Kyungsoo smiled as he watched the sunrise.

The air was lukewarm and a soft breeze drifted by from time to time, making his hair sway gently within. He enjoyed the calmness that the coast was bringing him in this time of the day.

When there was no one around and only the sound of waves tumbling over each other was to be heard.

Beautiful colors painted the horizon and with it also Kyungsoo's thoughts.

It had been seven years since they made it out of the Underwoods and also crossed the boundaries of the Upperwoods.

Seven long and exhausting, but also beautiful and memorable years.

It didn't feel like that long to him, to be honest. But on the other side, even the time in the Underwoods felt like a dream to him. If Kai hadn't been there to remind him every day what they had gone through, he would have believed it all had only happened in his head.

Pushing his hand through the soft sand underneath him, he sighed contentedly and closed his eyes to take in the sensations of the small sand corns on his fingers. Removing his shoes with his feet, he then did the same and burrowed them into the ground.

"Why didn't you wake me, love?"

Kyungsoo felt a pair of arms wind around his upper body as his mate crept up on him and he let himself fall into the embrace. "You looked so peaceful." The human whispered as an answer and let a gentle smile grace his face when he heard Kai chuckle. "You know I

dislike you being alone outside.”

It wasn't more than a playful, mild scolding he had heard every so often. The shifter has only started to relax after years, when he was familiar with the routine and had the situation under control. And he answered the same as always, with the soft whisper of a 'sorry' against Kai's throat.

The warm breath made Kai shudder a bit and he pulled away to kiss his mate softly. The kiss held so many emotions that it almost made Kyungsoo cry. When they broke the lip lock a few minutes later, Kai remembered something. “I met Yixing on the way. He asked if we'd like to have breakfast with him.”

Kai murmured against Kyungsoo's temple. The human hummed a bit and directed his gaze to the sea again. “Sure.” He answered then and Kai chuckled. ‘Well, then stand up?’ The shifter teased which led to Kyungsoo letting out a huff. “I'd love to, but it's so comfortable.”

“Want a piggyback ride?” That sealed the deal and Kyungsoo nodded excitedly. He felt like a kid all over again, and that feeling wasn't so bad. So when Kai got in position in front of him, he wasted to time and literally threw himself onto the broad back presented. Giggling when Kai huffed and acted like he put on so much weight, Kyungsoo was positive he had never felt happier than with Kai.

While Kai started walking, Kyungsoo took another moment to admire the soldier's features. His skin had its healthy tan color back. They had opted for changing Kai's looks every second or third time they'd move locations — which was every half a year, just to be safe — and the look his lover was sporting right now, was by far his most favorite of them all.

He had milky brown hair, barely reaching his earlobes in length and falling tousled over his head. It made him look much younger, honestly, and paired with his equally brown eyes, he looked like an ordinary young man.

He didn't know how, but Kai was able to suppress the red hue from his eyes. Though he'd let it come through when they were in the safety of their own home, saving his energy like this — *and* because Kyungsoo had been whining about it for a long time until Kai had given in, but no one needed to know that.

Kyungsoo also got to choose a new name for Kai, since he didn't want to push their luck when other people started to call him by his actual name. Kai was no ordinary name; the wolves would know instantly where he was.

Now, everyone called him *Jongin*.

And Kyungsoo was very satisfied with the name; he thought it suited the shifter.

They had already moved fourteen times in total, sometimes only just in time to avoid the wolves that were searching for them. By now they knew exactly how to act to avoid any spotlight.

Living in a small house or cottage, always with a good distance between them and the next village or city, they had their privacy and could do what they wanted. They'd both work at the same place, preferably a not so acquainted café or bakery, and avoid more contact with others than was needed.

On their way they met some rogue wolves that lived with the humans. They all had been peaceful and had no bad intentions, but when Kai smelled the scent of another wolf for the first time, he had nearly caused a ruckus. He remained wary of them until they moved again.

Yixing was actually the owner of the small bakery the mates were working at momentarily. His boyfriend was Joonmyeon, a slightly over-the-average rich guy, and actually a shifter too. Kai knew him from the Underwoods and it was surprising when Kai had suddenly sniffed the air and had tugged his mate until both wolves met; both subtly sniffing for each other.

His actual name was Suho, but he changed it for the same reasons as Kai. Joonmyeon had faked his death on a mission, on which Kai had also been. It had been a great shock for his group, so Kai was confused but happy to see his friend again. Yixing didn't know of him being a shifter, and he preferred it to stay that way.

So, soon they got introduced to Yixing and realized belatedly he was their boss. Since then they often met to eat together and Kyungsoo was more than happy to get some new people around to befriend.



Kyungsoo knocked when Kai was near enough to the door, refusing to get down from his mate's back. Kai chuckled at that and soon after the door opened, revealing a smiling Yixing. "Hey! You made it, I'm glad." He quickly ushered the mates in and they went to the spacious living room.

"Joonmyeon is upstairs, showering. He should be done any minute." Yixing explained, still smiling happily. Kyungsoo sniffed for the food that was already done and placed on the table in front of the kitchen counter. Only then he shuffled down from Kai's back and took his favorite spot on the seat by the edge.

Kai nodded, smiling slightly, because he knew Joonmyeon should have already smelled them by now. As expected, it only took a minute until Joonmyeon made his way down the stairs while ruffling his damp hair. "Hi Joonmyeon!" Kyungsoo greeted delighted and began to bounce on his seat, because now it was time to eat.

They ate the simple yet delicious breakfast served while Kyungsoo and Yixing held the conversation upright with some light topics. Kai wasn't much of a talkative person to begin with aside from with his mate, and Joonmyeon was halfheartedly reading the newspapers, sometimes throwing in his opinion.

After a few hours the pair went to the bakery with Yixing for another day of work.

The bakery was very cozy and there weren't too many costumers that visited them every day. Kyungsoo loved the smell of the fresh made baking goods that wafted through the air every morning when he'd open the shop with the owner. He loved the calm and light atmosphere, and the way his customers would always be polite and nice to him. This was by far his favorite place to stay at.

Kyungsoo was pulled out of his thoughts when Kai leaned up behind him and snuggled his face into his mate's neck. A bit surprised, but definitely not complaining, Kyungsoo raised his hands to Kai's on his hips and laced their fingers. Usually Kai didn't like to cuddle in public — as for he was an alpha, and alphas don't cuddle — but today he seemed extra clingy. Again, Kyungsoo was not complaining.

The day flew by fast, as every other day, and soon Kyungsoo found himself closing the door and bidding his goodbye to Kai. "Take care, Kyungsoo, Jongin. I'll see you tomorrow!" Yixing squished Kyungsoo's

cheek once and then was on his way, leaving Kyungsoo flustered because he didn't particularly like when someone pinched his cheeks.

Kai had been more silent than usual the whole day, but Kyungsoo didn't think much of it because everyone had their silent days. Though he'd been more affectionate, but that also may be just a one-time-thing. So he just laced their fingers and tugged the shifter a bit to follow him, as for he seemed a bit absentmindedly. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine." Kai answered and pulled Kyungsoo a bit closer, and disconnected their hands to throw an arm over his lover. Kyungsoo immediately glued himself to the alpha to get more warmth. "I just can't wait until we are home." At that Kyungsoo looked up question, just in time to see a highlighted red hue break flash up through the brown irises before it disappeared again.

Kai was aroused.

Kyungsoo's lips slowly formed a teasing grin and he pushed Kai away in favor of dashing forward. The shifter got the idea and a smirk took over his lips, his eyes barely withholding the red glow. The human was by far no match for the shifter, but still Kyungsoo found himself laughing loudly until he spotted their little hut.

He had just reached the door and started fumbling with the keys when another body crashed into his and he felt how teeth started to nibble at his neck. His breathing grew labored from arousal and he barely managed to open the door. The second Kai made out the light click sound, he pushed them inside roughly.

Kyungsoo giggled when Kai impatiently pushed the door closed with his foot and growled softly. Immediately the shifter positioned his hands on Kyungsoo's thighs and lifted him effortlessly, pressing the human onto the door the next second.

He started peppering Kyungsoo's neck with kisses and murmured passionate words all the while, successfully riling Kyungsoo up even more. Whatever was going on with his mate today; Kyungsoo found himself not minding it the slightest as he admired the aroused look in his alpha's eyes.

Kyungsoo panted, still coming down from his high, and closed his eyes in contentment. He then felt Kai roll off and beside him, and then take one of his hands.

The alpha pulled his hand up to his mouth and proceeded to press a tender kiss on every knuckle. After that he kissed Kyungsoo's claim mark, where the skin now glowed, a bit aggravated from the latest bite.

Lastly the alpha pushed their lips together and guided Kyungsoo in a slow, sensual kiss.

Kyungsoo felt boneless and happy under all the affection, so he opened his eyes confused when Kai covered him under the blankets but, instead of also lying down, he made his way out of the bed and redressed. "Where are you going, Kai?"

"There's something I need to take care of." The shifter replied, not exactly giving Kyungsoo the answer he wanted to hear. Kyungsoo sat up and grabbed for Kai's wrist while staring up at his alpha with wide, pleading eyes, but the shifter just chuckled and bent down to tenderly kiss his mate again.

"Promise you will be back when I wake up." Kyungsoo whispered, trying to compromise; his grip on the shifters wrist still not faltering.

By now he could clearly feel something wasn't right with the way Kai was too calm, too composed. Kyungsoo had a vague idea of what was going on, but he chose to stay ignorant and believe Kai's white lies.

"I promise I'll come back to you, my love."

When Kai closed the door after himself, Kyungsoo listened until he could no longer feel his mate's presence. His mind was blank, his heart hurting.

If it was hours or days later, he didn't know, but he fell asleep with tears tirelessly rolling over his cheeks.

When Kai had passed the borders of the forest, and had made sure that nobody was following him, he quickly shed his clothes to shift right after. After another look around just to be sure, he then started to run deeper into the woods.

It wasn't long until he reached his destination and by then he knew it were only a few shifters that were waiting for him. While slowing

down he took a whiff of Chanyeol's scent, reassured that it was his friend was one of them. It meant he'd keep his promise to Kai.

Soon Kai passed the safety of the trees and entered the clearing. He stepped in front of the group and waited for an order, which came soon. "Shift."

He did as he was told. Two of the others shifted and crossed the distance, kicking in his shins when they were behind him to make him kneel on the ground forcefully. Kai kept his gaze straight up. He still had his pride as an alpha and he didn't see anything to regret with what he had done.

Unexpectedly Chanyeol got pushed forward and the taller then hesitantly made his way to stand in front of Kai. On the outside Kai looked stoic, void of any emotion, but internally Kai smiled. He was genuinely happy to see his friend.

*We meet again, my friend.*

Chanyeol gulped hard and went down to morph into his wolf form.

*I came to fulfill your wish.*

After hearing those words, Kai closed his eyes and allowed a small smile to form on his lips.

*Please look after Kyungsoo. Make sure he stays safe.*

*I will.*

Since that day, three years have passed.

In those three years a lot happened, and Kyungsoo had trouble coping with it.

Wolves were no open prey anymore and were allowed to visit the Upperwoods as they wished. Any hunter who would attack them was allowed to be killed when necessary.

The shifters were still cautious and reserved, and it would take a lot of time to get used to the recovered freedom — for shifters and humans equally.

But it was a first step, and after a first step had to follow a second one.

It was hard but not impossible.

And the peace attempts brought many advantages with it. For example, the meat that used to be very expensive before was now a lot cheaper than. Also, the gaps of knowledge were fixed.

But, as mentioned, Kyungsoo had trouble to adjust.

It wasn't about the two races being reunited.

He even met Chanyeol again and got introduced to his mate, Baekhyun. The beta had apologized numerous of times, even broke out into tears when Chanyeol clarified that indeed Kyungsoo had been Kai's mate.

Kyungsoo's heart wasn't torn anymore, but the stitches on it still hurt. He couldn't find it in himself to remain mad at the shifter when the deed had already been done. Instead he gifted the beta a gentle smile that didn't reach his eyes, and a tender hug.

Afterwards Chanyeol pulled him aside to give him the last belongings of Kai. The alpha had made sure to protect his friend's belongings when the higher-ups had ordered him to get rid of them. Waiting for the perfect moment, he handed them over to the human and then left him alone. Just in time, because moments later he had started crying once again, and he wouldn't want to disturb Chanyeol's mind any more.

He also met Sehun again. Belatedly he thanked the ex-soldier for his unexpected help and got a light pat on his head in return. He still didn't know why Sehun had helped them that time, but he didn't care much either.

The alpha resigned from his place in the shifter's military and opted to leave the city and travel. When Sehun asked him if he wanted to join him for the journey, the human hadn't missed a heartbeat to accept the offer.

They left the very same evening and Kyungsoo continued to live the best he possibly could.

He got more knowledge over time and his view of the world also changed in hindsight.

It took him about two more years until he had enough of travelling and split up with Sehun — who finally had found his mate, Luhan — and made his way back.

When he returned to his birth city, he was welcomed with open arms. Chanyeol helped him with building a small cottage near the place Kai had been executed, though he didn't approve the choice of location.

Kyungsoo got a job at a library and there he worked his days away.

With a new place to call home and a stable job, Kyungsoo started drawing again and within time also writing. After some time he even started selling his works and soon after he quit his job, because he could afford his simple lifestyle with the money his books made.

The books he wrote encouraged people to think of their behavior and mindset, showed them other colors in life and told of miracles others wouldn't think of.

He wasn't happy, but he tried.

He really did. *For Kai's sake.*

So, no, it wasn't about the new freedom for wolves. It was because something was just *missing*.

Rather *someone* was missing, and that left a deep, aching hole in what he once had found joy in.

And even after all this time, his train of thoughts didn't stop.

If he had fallen through the portal just a bit later or if they didn't get revealed; if they had escaped later or endured longer before getting found — would his beloved still be alive and with him?

Also, who had been given the right to judge who's your friend, who's your foe?

And by whom had he been given this privilege?

By what criteria are such being sorted?

They say every human has his own unique mind and thoughts differencing him from everyone else around. It's what makes them so singular and matchless.

But why wouldn't other creatures be unique themselves, too?

They say love knows no boundaries.

That you have the right to choose whom you want to be with the rest of your life.

But why, when you say you love a shifter, do they say it doesn't apply to this situation?

Again, who has given you the right to change the rules to your liking?

Is it fair to disapprove someone's love only because you dislike their own, unique being?

They say everyone deserves a second chance.

That everything can be forgiven if the being has pure intentions.

But does *everyone* not include shifters?

Maybe humans are just so scared that they won't get a second chance themselves?

Because, deep down, they know they had been — and still are — wrong.

Isn't it easier to live the way you've done for the past years, instead of agreeing to your mistakes and flaws, and adjust to the mistreated?

Many wouldn't be able to take the shame they'd feel then.

But we are *only human*.

We will learn from our mistakes eventually and rise anew as better people.

Within time, everything will fall back into place again.

But at that time, who will be thinking of the broken hearts, mourning for the unrighteous fallen souls?

Who will thank the beings whom had to give their lives for something so ridiculous?

Had to give their life for other people to remain selfish?

Maybe we all are just so imperfect to see what is really important, until we lose it for good.

But maybe that's just how life works and the price we have to pay to see what's happening beyond our horizon.

That doesn't make it any less unfair, but it gives us the strength to move on.

After all, we are *only human*.

Kyungsoo sighed when he finished his last sentence and finally let the pencil drop and roll over the table. Slowly he raised a hand to his face to wipe the sweat off his forehead, meanwhile sinking a bit down the chair. His fingers hurt and he just wanted to sleep, but the words and sentences that ran through his head wouldn't stop irritating him until he'd write them down.

He cuddled deeper into his sweater and inhaled slightly. The fabric only had his scent on it. Kyungsoo sighed again and stared up at the ceiling. He missed Kai's scent. *He missed Kai.*

*"My love."*

Kyungsoo froze and his eyes widened. *Please, don't let this be my mind playing tricks on me.*

He slowly turned around, his body tense, and when his eyes caught who he had wanted to see for so, so long, tears slowly trailed down his cheeks.

*"I promised you, didn't I?"*



a/n: Wow. So... *that's the end, huh?*

*Honestly, I was close to tears while writing the ending. \*wipes tears\* I'm not really satisfied with this chapter as I have been with the others, maybe I'll write it anew in future, but for now I think its okay.*

*So, what do you think of the end? Did Kyungsoo just imagine Kai's voice? Did Kai escape somehow? Let me know your thoughts, as for this is the last chapter! :)*

*I won't write too much for now, because I will upload some notes and explanations soon, but I really want to thank every upvoter, subscriber, commenter and reader for the support and love this fiction has gotten!*

*\*spreads love\* Thanks so much! (I'll pbly upload the notes tomorrow, as for I don't have a schedule to follow anymore xD I'd be really happy if you'd read it, but its no must.)*

*\* I have no medical degree or great knowledge in that department, everything that's mentioned there I got after researching on that matter. If there are any mistakes, please point them out. :)*

—Smile.

## Chapter 6

---

05

Notes & Last Words.

I don't expect anyone to read these notes, to be completely honest, but I have to get some things out of my mind. If you're planning on reading this, get ready for a long ass note. :)

First of all: I'm **overwhelmed** with the love *Underwood* has gotten here!

Only the thought of over 200 (now 370! ;A;) people reading my work makes me really, really happy — and anxious in a way.

Anxious because — if it's not painfully obvious — I'm not very confident in my writing. But critique is needed to improve, so I just have to get over this.

It's kinda stiff and my vocabulary isn't that expanded yet, but I work on it. At this point, another thanks to my beta for helping me with it!

This fiction is primarily focusing on the development of Kyungsoo's and Kai's relationship.

It shows both perspectives, though mainly Kyungsoo's.

He's in a difficult position because he's confined in Kai's room most of the time. I'm sure many of you can't imagine the way he probably feels and I also had a hard time to empathize with him. It takes a great mental strength to live through such circumstances. Kyungsoo may seem clingy and weak throughout the story, but he is at least as strong as Kai. If not even stronger in regards of mental strength. Kyungsoo knows when he's in a dead end since he's not stupid by any means, quite the contrary actually. While living alone and fending for himself, he has learned to think forward and matured fast. Never having actually been in a relationship, he's insecure depending almost everything but otherwise a patient and simple character. Else he is an open-minded and impulsive person who adapts fast and knows when to resist or to give in.

Then there's Kai. He is a physically and mentally strong character with many curves and edges (*that I couldn't describe as well as I wanted to x.x*).

He is independent and has always had everything under control until then. Being trained to keep emotions out of his decisions and that they have no big importance at all, it's only natural for him to be unsure and inexperienced in the emotional department. But that doesn't make him any less of a gentle persona despite of being a soldier. He's used to finding a solution alone without asking for help so he does just that, but also wants to make his mate comfortable by shouldering his worries too. Not being one to nag or be bratty in usual, he keeps quiet and just does his thing while respecting the boundaries. He's a lover of skin-ship as many shifters are.

As every other relationship, this one also grew with time and equal effort put into it.

But since I planned it to be a short story, I couldn't make a chapter for each day they spend. Another reason is also that since Kyungsoo's chained to the boundaries of Kai's room, I didn't spend too much time in describing everything going on in the Underwoods. You readers only know a tad more than Kyungsoo knows about the Underwoods and it is after all still a mystery to him.

I could've written more in Kai's perspective, but that wouldn't have proven anything I wanted to show. If you were alone in a room and your only connection to the outside is your lover, would you know everything that happens every day outside? Most certainly not. There are certain things that have absolutely no meaning when you can't understand because you *cannot see* and experience them yourself.

Also, this wouldn't have been a KaiSoo story if it was all about Kai wandering around and fighting and here and there and oh, here's a quick input of Kyungsoo vegetating in his room. I'm sure you follow me, right?

What I'm not that satisfied with, is that I wasn't able to write *as deep as I wanted to*. I wanted to describe it with more depth, about emotions and the way of a relationship to build up through trust and a confined mind, but failed miserably.

Some parts were written more detailed because those where the

times they actually made great progress, e.g. one finally opens up and takes a step forward regarding trust issues.

I'm sure that is not what many of you anticipated or expected and it may seem boring to you as there is no real highlight through action or dramatic incidents, but I decided on highlighting emotional problems that many of us have.

*Regarding Chapter 03:* Another thing is... that had been my first time writing actual smut. Being as inexperienced as Kai, I'm sorry you had to put up with that. That counts too for the... is that even allowed to call dirty talking? Well, I love dirty talking. It's sexy as hell and all that shiz, but with me being as sexual as a Cactus, my attempt probably also didn't come out that good, I guess?

*Regarding Chapter 04:* — Again, I have no medical degree or anything similar. I researched about that matter and wrote about what I could gather on information. If there are some errors or something to be mentioned and you have knowledge about this, then please don't hesitate to tell me, it actually also is interesting to me.

— Ahh, and I got asked to explain who exactly executed Kai in the last Chapter. You see, Kai indirectly made Chanyeol promise that he wants his friend to be the one to actually take his life. So when *I came to fulfill your wish* it was Chanyeol who wanted to grant him the wish by killing him and not someone else. I hope it makes sense now?

*Regarding the whole fiction:* — Another thing I am not familiar with is about military and their rankings. I loosely researched on that matter too, though I made up a big part of it so it fits the story better. Though I am interested in that matter, so if you have anything to tell me about that, don't hesitate.

— Also, this may look like the known Stockholm-Syndrome, but I can assure you it is **not** what I had in mind. The thought that it could look like that only crossed my mind during the second chapter.

— I got some comments asking for a sequel/epilogue... tbh I *don't know* if I'll write one. For me this is finished by now, maybe in future, but I don't think so. I'm sorry, but sometimes it won't really help if theres a sequel. I ended the last chapter like this, with a kinda open ending, for a reason. For you to be free to imagine.

**UPDATE:** *Did a poll after receiving a deep review and now it stands*

*that I'll do both Pre— as well as a Sequel to this story. :)*

It's interesting to see how you all interpreted the ending. Some didn't understand, some were sure Kai returned from Kyungsoo's last reaction, some think he's dead for real. As I said, I did it on purpose. :)

The titles for the chapters are actually song quotes that inspired me a lot while writing. They also contributed some aspects of the story itself.

*The quotes are from {Alina Baraz & Galimatias — Maybe}.*

**CH01;** *What do I do when there's too much of me, too little of you? / Maybe I'll get you out of my head.*

= The first one I kinda based on the second chapter because Kai learn so much of Kyungsoo and how to treat him and so on. And there is Kyungsoo who knows little to nothing about Kai, he doesn't know if there is a special way to behave or not since Kai is so closed off to him. The second one describes Kai's thoughts when he is aroused of Kyungsoo's actions and welcomes the ton of tasks that are thrown over him.

**CH02;** *What can I say when I know you're not here to stay? / Maybe I'll forget all the things you said.*

= Kai thinks Kyungsoo only agreed to be his mate because he has no other choice, so he's not sure if Kyungsoo would even stay if he had the chance to go back to the Upperwoods.

**CH03;** *Why do I stay if I know you're not mine? / Maybe I'll forget you some other time.*

= Kyungsoo won't ever be completely his like a wolf mate would be, but after some time thinking about it Kai chooses to ignore that. He's not quite sure how this whole situation will end, if he brings Kyungsoo back or continues with 'imprisoning' him.

**CH04;** *Lies on your lips, but there's love in your eyes. / Maybe...*

= That obviously is about Kai taking the responsibility about defeating Chanyeol, even though he didn't, only to be with Kyungsoo some more. The second one is about Kyungsoo doubting that the outcome couldn't have been any different if they handled the situation different.

Lastly, about the ending of this story; I had a special message in mind and I wonder if you have figured it out?

Let me know, I'd appreciate it!

I want to thank every single one that read till here and tried to understand my mindset about this! :)

Also, again, ***thank you so much for sticking with this fiction to the end!***

It made me honestly cry when I uploaded the last chapter and got so much feedback. It showed that you cared enough for sharing your opinion with me, and that's something I love. It may be overpraised for you, but it's my first fiction after *years* of writers block and that makes it all so much more special in my opinion.

Okay, enough before I'll start sobbing again. xD

Have a beautiful day! ♥

—Smile

Underwood

*THANKS FOR READING!*